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Alumni Notes

Class Notes, Profiles, and Losses in the Oberlin Family

alum.mag@oberlin.edu



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For 40 years, Oberlin students have taken the month of January to explore something new in the universe—or in themselves. Katharine Sontag '09 tells the story of her winter term teaching in Indonesia, and pictures tell the stories of a few of the 2,350 students who took part in a project this winter.

16 Big Box Reuse

Julia Christensen says her project—exploring the re-use of spaces once occupied by big box stores—sits at the intersection of art and research. The multidisciplinary approach suits Christensen, who holds a joint appointment in the College and the Conservatory as Oberlin's Luce Visiting Professor of the Emerging Arts. / by Kris Ohlson

20 Living for a Laugh

Imagining the universe as a geeky science experiment is one of the concepts Rich Orloff '73 mines for humor. But don't ask the former sitcom writer—and possibly one of the most popular unknown playwrights in America—about his “craft.” / by Tom Nugent

[Cover]

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A selection of Oberlin faculty members weighs in on whether the election of Barack Obama means transformation—or merely transition. / by Carol Lasser, Eric Estes, Jafar Mahallati, Caroline Jackson Smith, Marc Blecher, Timothy Hall, and Roger Copeland



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A Season for Change

IT'S MY FIRST SPRING IN OBERLIN since my student days, and everything seems to cue a memory.

Remember April? The sunshine would bring us to Wilder Bowl between classes, where we'd emerge from our winter naps like kittens: a sea of stretching arms and yawns, an abundance of smiles. The nights were still chilly, but we'd sleep with the windows open regardless; the air always smelled so new, so full of promise. Weekend walks in the Arb, stargazing in the North fields. Spring sports and t-shirt weather and co-op pizza eaten outside on the steps.

These were the moments in which we'd all pause to remind ourselves how much we loved being here. And then the clock would speed up, as if exponentially, and bring us to May in what seemed like the blink of an eye. Another school year behind us.

With the publication of this issue, the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* has entered a new season as well. After serving for a decade as editor of OAM, Kelly Viancourt has accepted a new position in our office as director of print and publications. In this role, she will work closely with each department to ensure that all of Oberlin's print projects are consistent, cost-effective, and in line with Oberlin's commitment to sustainability. I simply can't imagine a better person for the job.

Please join me in congratulating Kelly, and in thanking her for her many terrific years of leading the OAM team. In my short time here, I have received a flood of letters from alumni and parents, all filled with compliments on the OAM. The new editor has very big shoes to fill, indeed. (No pressure, Jeff!)

On a personal note, I'd like to thank Kelly for being so kind and helpful to me during the transition into my new job this past fall. She helped me more than she knows, and I'll always be grateful.

Speaking of the new OAM editor, please allow me to introduce Jeff Hagan '86. We received many more applications for the position than I ever could have predicted; despite the strong applicant pool, Jeff stood out immediately for his terrific ideas and intimate knowledge of Oberlin. I think you're really going to like the new things that Jeff has planned for the OAM.

With every changing of the guard, there comes a great opportunity to evaluate where we've been and where we might go. Jeff, Kelly, and I are very excited to include you in this process; please look for the forthcoming readership survey that will be inserted into the summer issue of the OAM. Collecting your feedback and suggestions is a critical step towards our goal of taking the OAM to the next level.

Last but not least, we have recently started publishing an electronic newsletter called *Around The Square*, named after the print counterpart of yesterday. It's a wonderful way to stay in touch with campus news and events. If you haven't received it, please make sure that we have your current e-mail address on file (visit www.oberlin.edu/alumni and go to the OBIWeb box).

I am very much looking forward to seeing many of you at Commencement/Reunion Weekend. In the meantime, enjoy the spring—and your springtime memories of Oberlin.

BEN JONES '96

Vice President for Communications, Oberlin College

President Krislov's column, which usually appears in this space, is printed in longer form this month in the middle of the magazine.

Oberlin Alumni Magazine welcomes mail from readers. Please address your comments to Oberlin Alumni Magazine, 145 W. Lorain St., Oberlin, OH 44074-1089; e-mail: alum.mag@oberlin.edu; P: 440.775.8182, F: 440.775.6575. The editor reserves the right to edit for clarity and space. Additional letters may appear on OAM's web site at www.oberlin.edu/oam.

● PORTRAIT OF THE ACTOR AS A YOUNG SOLDIER

As an alumnus and fellow student, I was pleased to see that Eric Bogosian's unique career received the attention it deserves (Winter 2008-09). While I wouldn't presume to contradict Dade Hayes' review of Eric's eclectic background, I would like to augment the information by identifying two projects equally worthy of note.

Eric played a central role in Atom Egoyan's *Ararat*, a remarkable movie about the Armenian massacres at the hands of the Turks. The movie is good, and Eric is very good in it. Beyond that, it is a story that should not disappear from our awareness.

The second bit of biographical information is one that Eric's Oberlin fans might enjoy: In June of 1975, the Inter-Arts Program presented Anton Chekhov's *Three Sisters*. Most notable is the very young Eric Bogosian as a Russian soldier, bottom left in the picture (see photo below).



For Oberlin historians, there are two other notable members of the cast: David Young, emeritus professor of creative writing (upper left, with such poise) and Ronald Suny, former professor of history (upper center). Wedged comically between them, with a handlebar moustache, is a much younger me.

For David, Ron, and myself (all returned to more familiar academic pursuits), the very heights of our short but memorable theatrical careers turned out to be the beginning of Eric's remarkable career, something I (for one) brag about at every opportunity.

Stuart Robbins '75
Oakland, Calif.

● GREEN ISSUE, RECYCLED

John Tanner '51 thinks advocates of green energy absent nuclear energy are living in a

“ I'll bet you many of us were “green”

pioneers before that was even a term. ”

dream world (*Letters*, Winter 2008-09). Let me suggest a way to put that to direct test. Suppose we adopt policies (which I fully support) of putting all energy sources on an equal footing via comprehensive environmental taxes and exactions on externalities. That means a stiff carbon tax and expedited nuclear approvals, but also a requirement that nuclear plants forego Price-Anderson protection and instead purchase bonded open market insurance against Chernobyl-sized catastrophes and also post an endowment large enough to cover on-site waste disposal in perpetuity. But we don't actually have to run this test to get an informed answer. Instead, I suggest that Tanner talk to any nuclear power industry chief financial officer, and find out who is really living in a dream world. Nuclear power appropriately priced is not even competitive with coal, let alone wind or thermal solar (even allowing for transmission lines and diurnal cycle storage).

David Burress '66
Lawrence, Kan.

Thank you so much for the articles on the sustainability measures being taken by Oberlin students, professors, and alumni! It was very inspiring and encouraging. And great motivation to make my own waves to get into the next green issue. Keep up the great work!

Chris Stratton '02
Eugene, Ore.

After reading the issue on Oberlin's green grads, I'd like to suggest you write something on the elders who have been dedicated pioneers in the green movement their whole lives and not limit your focus to the “bright young things” who have just made a splash

and won notoriety shortly after graduation.

I can think of two classmates who have spent their lives in the “green” movement. Alan Hooper '59, who's been teaching soil biology at the University of Minnesota for most of his life, and Barbara Gilruth '59 (now deceased), who took up organic farming, managing a vineyard and walnut orchard by herself in Paso Robles, Calif., for many years, and built a straw-bale house. I'll bet you many of us were “green” pioneers before that was even a term. In my case, after joining the San Francisco's Zen Center, I learned to grow and cook organic vegetarian foods, raise cut flowers and herbs organically for the San Francisco market, and lived on an organic farm and Zen retreat center for 20 years.

That's a part of my green story.

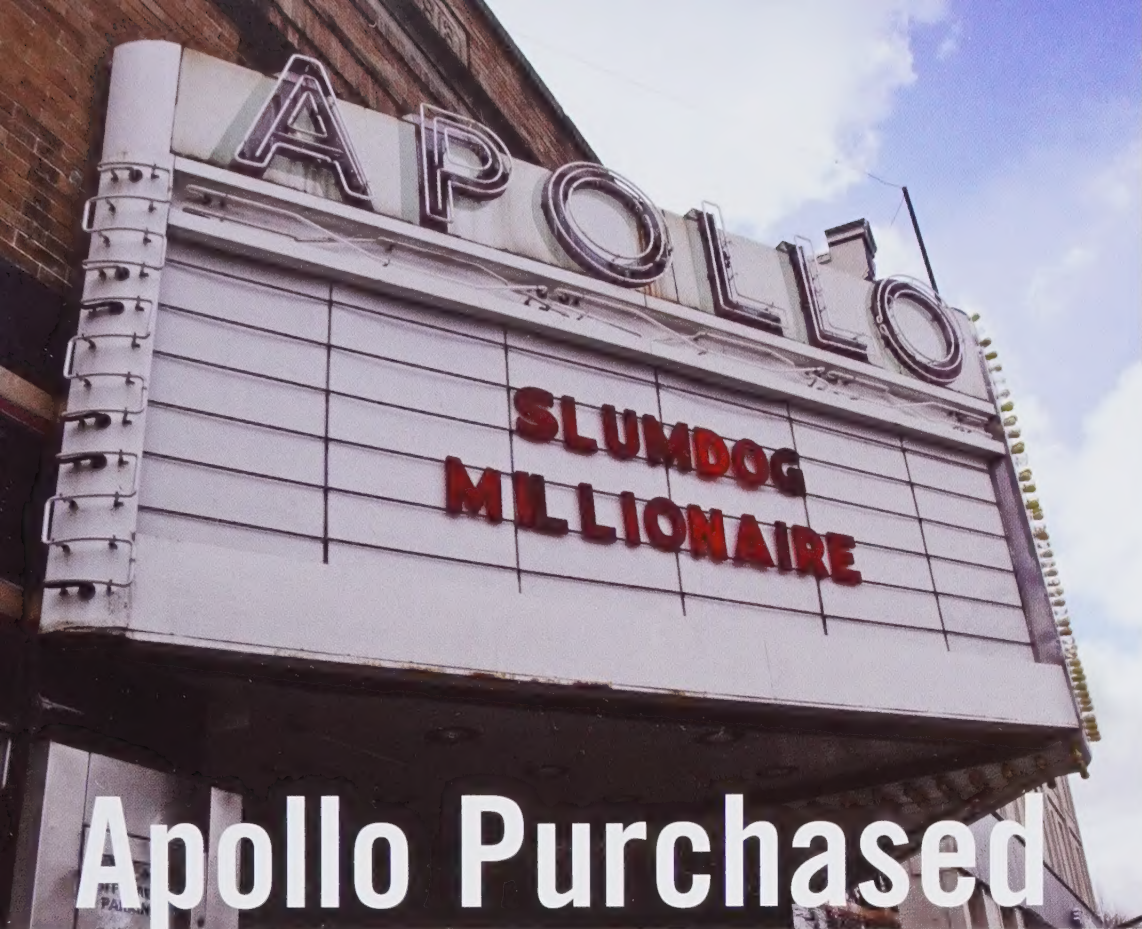
Now [among other things] I do restoration horticulture and design, putting streams back together, revegetating their banks, and restoring native plant habitat in urban and rural settings.

There must be lots of us. Could that become some kind of article for you? Might be interesting to put out a request to folks over 60 or 65. What do you think?

Katharine Cook '59
Marshall, Calif.

Editor's Reply: Sounds good to us. We'll be compiling information on Oberlin's early green graduates for a possible future story—so, readers, let us know your story. Write to the addresses listed at the top of this page.

Tributes written by former students Leslie Lawrence '72 and Rachel Ableson Hickson '80 to Professor Emeritus of Musicology Sylvan Suskin, who passed away last October, can be found on the Letters to the Editor page on the magazine's web site at www.oberlin.edu/oam.



Harmony Pringle '11

Apollo Purchased

Friends and Alumni Group Buy Historic Theater

In hopes of preserving a cherished local institution, College Properties of Oberlin, a subsidiary of Oberlin College, purchased the historic Apollo Theatre in February. It is one of the few single-screen movie houses still operating in the United States. Cleveland Cinemas will manage the theater.

Oberlin's interest in purchasing the theater complex, which includes commercial and residential spaces adjacent to it, arose after it became clear that there were no viable alternatives to save it, says President Marvin Krislov. "The Steel family had put the theater up for sale months before, but no serious buyers emerged. Given the current state of the economy, it was not the best of times to buy a movie theater. Nor was it something we planned to do. But none of us could imagine Oberlin without the Apollo," he says.

Board of Trustees Chair Robert Lemle '75, who contributed to the effort, agrees. "It is important, given the difficult economic times, that the College was able to fund the purchase of the Apollo and its initial operating expenses entirely through private gifts," he says. "That reflects how important the theater is to the greater Oberlin community."

Others who funded the purchase and renovation of the theater were alumni, friends of the College, and local community members, including previous owners William and Sandy Steel; television director

James Burrows '62 and his wife, Debbie Burrows; the Goldring Family Foundation; the Nord Family Foundation; and an anonymous Oberlin High School graduate.

The College is committed to maintaining the theater's historically valuable features, says Krislov. "Our hope is that the Apollo will become more than just a movie theater. We would like to see it become a venue for showcasing the wealth of theatrical, artistic, and musical talent that thrives in Oberlin. We also see it offering exciting new opportunities to students and faculty in our cinema studies and theater programs." Oberlin continues to graduate students who go on to have outstanding careers in theater, motion pictures, and television, such as Julie Taymor '74, Avery Brooks '70, John Kander '51, and Ed Helms '96.

The 840-seat theater was built in 1913 and purchased by the Steel family in 1928. That year, the Apollo screened the first "talkie," or sound film, in local history. It was last remodeled in 1950. The first phase of renovations, which consists of bringing the theater up to building codes, is expected to be completed this summer. A grand reopening will take place in the fall. In the meantime, the Apollo recently added matinees to its schedule of show times.

While the Apollo will continue to be a working movie theater, future plans include transforming other parts of it into a performance space and a venue for community

events. For this part of the project, the College chose the architecture firm of Westlake Reed Leskosky, the same firm that designed Oberlin's Phyllis Litoff Building, currently under construction.

To financially support this phase, a Friends of the Apollo organization for local and national membership was formed. Fundraising activities will benefit the theater's ongoing and future programming and educational outreach activities. The Friends steering committee members include actors Rhea Perlman and Danny DeVito, filmmaker Jonathan Demme, local arts advocates Kevin Flanigan and Jaqui Willis, and former students Elizabeth Ignat-Bausch '91 and Justin Ignat-Bausch '90. **ATS**

For more information about Friends of the Apollo, contact Zachary.Pretzer@oberlin.edu. Marvin Krislov talked to NPR about the Apollo purchase. Listen at www.wcpn.org/index.php/WCPN/an/24965/.



Harmony Pringle '11

Danielle Koplanka-Loehr '09

Watson Winner to Explore the Effects of Classical Music on At-Risk Children

Danielle Koplanka-Loehr '09 is one of 40 students nationwide selected to receive a prestigious Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. She will use her \$28,000 stipend to travel to four countries to examine youth orchestral programs that enroll street children, and search for the secret behind their success in a world where interest in classical music is waning.

Though the Watson program typically grants fellowships to 50 college seniors who “exhibit unusual promise” a year of independent exploration and travel outside the U.S., current economic conditions led to a decrease in the number of awardees; Koplinka-Loehr, a music education and trumpet and comparative literature major, is among the chosen few.

Koplinka-Loehr will study the success of four groundbreaking international musical youth education programs: El Sistema in Venezuela, Fundación de Orquestas Juveniles e Infantiles in Chile, Sinfonía por la vida in Ecuador, and In Harmony in the United Kingdom.

“When I return, I would love to work with one of several similar programs that are beginning in the United States, or begin my own program,” she says. **ATS**

Copeland Scholarship Keeps Family Legacy Alive

by Elizabeth Weinstein '02

Financing a master of education degree at Oberlin will become a little easier for future Graduate Teacher Education Program (GTEP) students, thanks to a generous new scholarship fund.

The John and Delilah Copeland Scholarship Fund was established in October 2008 by a gift from Copeland family descendants, as directed by Brenda Pitts, the great-great-great-granddaughter of John and Delilah. The Copeland family has strong ties to the community, and, according to Pitts, John and Delilah were parents to John Anthony Copeland, who attended the Preparatory Academy at Oberlin College from 1854 to 1855.

John Anthony Copeland, who dedicated his life to the anti-slavery movement, participated in the Oberlin-Wellington Rescue and John Brown's 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry.

The Copeland family “instilled a sense of high self-esteem and a value for education, high integrity, and doing the very best

job that you can do,” Pitts says in an Oberlin College scholarship video. Many Copeland descendants, as a result, have become teachers.

The John and Delilah Copeland Scholarship will be awarded annually by the Office of Financial Aid to academically and financially deserving GTEP students to help them carry on the Copeland family legacy of excellence in education and the pursuit of social justice.

“Because Oberlin provided an opportunity for my great-great-great uncles and aunts to get an education, we felt it was our duty and responsibility to honor them by providing a scholarship so that other students can have the opportunity to receive the education that was so important to the Copeland family,” Pitts says. **ATS**

For more information, contact the Stewardship Office at stewardship@oberlin.edu or (440) 775-8569.

It's Official, East College Street Project is Under Way

by Yvonne Gay Fowler

Atall, thin, and tired-looking Ben Ezinga '01 hunched over the microphone and silently wept. He, Naomi Sabel, and Josh Rosen would no longer have to wonder who among them would be the first to cry in front of the crowd of supporters that had gathered in West Lecture Hall this early March morning—they were all vying for first place.

It had taken eight long years of false starts and setbacks to get “the kids,” as they are fondly referred, to this point. That's why the two-day-long groundbreaking celebration for the East College Street Project they started as students was all the sweeter.

Sabel '02, Ezinga, and Rosen '01 are redeveloping 2.3 acres of abandoned brown field in downtown Oberlin into a sustainable mixed-use complex with 33 residential units and 22,500 square feet of commercial space, thanks to investments of \$16 million and supporters like Richard Baron '64 of McCormack Baron Salazar.

“As long as they were willing to keep working, there was reason to believe,” Ezinga said of Baron and the many others who served as mentors. “These individuals not only assisted us, but helped to find new ways to bring businesses, living spaces, jobs, and tax revenue to Oberlin.” **ATS**

For more information, visit www.sustainableca.com.



Professor David Orr, Sabel, Ezinga, and Rosen toast to the East College Street Project.

John Seyfried



Courtesy of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard

Callie Crossley

"We journalists were set up as the fourth estate. We are to afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted. When you really get clear about what the role of [a] journalist is, you can see how it separates out from media."

—Callie Crossley, journalist and producer in an interview with the *Review* while on campus to give a convocation talk.

"The avant-garde is getting virtually no support, even less than in the 19th century."

—Comic book author Harvey Pekar in an interview with the *Review* while on campus to give a one-night performance of *Leave Me Alone!*, a jazz opera by Dan Plonsey with a libretto by Pekar.

"Reality, based on our day-to-day experiences, is not what we think it is."

—Brian Greene, renowned physicist, string theorist, and author, during his convocation talk.

"Life is an adventure for people with courage."

—An excerpt from Eric Bogosian's *Drinking in America*, read by the 1976 Oberlin graduate during his convocation talk, "Bitter Honey: A Reading." Bogosian's visit to campus was held in conjunction with the Theater and Dance Program's production of his play, *SubUrbia*.

Green Amenities Abound in New Practice Space

by Yvonne Gay Fowler

A crack in a truss resulted in the closing of Jones Field House last February—the main practice space for varsity and club sports. The answer for a new facility, as it turned out, was only a few yards away. After partnering with Bostwick Design Partners and the Krill Company, Inc., the Department of Athletics has been busy converting the old Williams Ice Rink into a multiple-sport practice space. When complete, the adaptive reuse of the rink and added green features may result in the facility becoming the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold-rated building on campus.

The U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program is a third-party certification that sets nationally accepted benchmarks for the design, construction, and operation of high-performance green buildings. Besides the adaptive reuse of the ice rink, natural ventilation and skylights, abundant natural lighting, light sensors, enhanced commissioning of the mechanical and electrical systems, and many other environmental features will make the new field house a good candidate for Gold LEED certification, says Steve Varelmann, director of Facilities Planning and Construction.

The rink had ceased use as a skating facility in November 2001, when it fell into disrepair. It has since been used as a multi-purpose building.

The new space, to be called the Williams Field House, will serve as a year-round practice facility. The 25,000 square-foot building will also feature an 85-by-180-foot monofilament turf field.

Although Jones Field House will be demolished, Varelmann says much of the material will be recycled. Bricks will be set aside for purchase by those seeking a piece of history. Visit www.goyeo.com/index.aspx for more information and to view pictures of the construction.

The field house project is expected to be completed later this spring. **ATS**

Visit www.oberlin.edu/oam to read about the history of both buildings.



New Williams Field House, located next to the Kahn Track and Shults Field.

Harmony Pringle '11

NEW ALUMNI E-NEWSLETTER

Around the Square: Your Inside Connection to Oberlin Stories, News, and Events, is a new e-newsletter for alumni, emeriti, and friends of the College. *ATS* reports on institutional developments; the achievements of faculty, staff, and students; town-gown news; and events and opportunities for alumni. To receive the newsletter, all that's needed is an updated e-mail address.

To Update Your E-Mail Address: Log on to OBIEweb at www.oberlin.edu/alumni/ and click on "My Alumni Profile" in the "Keep in Touch" bar on the left. Then click on "Edit My Personal Profile." To register for OBIEweb, select "Register for MyOBIEweb" on the OBIEweb homepage, and follow the simple instructions. You will need your unique security code the first time you enter the community; your ID number is located above your address on the mailing label of this magazine. Direct questions or updates to alumni@oberlin.edu or (440) 775-8692.

ALUMNI TRAVEL PROGRAM

Civil Rights Trail in Alabama: Celebrating and Remembering

October 2–6, 2009

The stoic dignity of Rosa Parks. The crushing loss of life of the “Four Little Girls.” The bravery of those young and old beaten with billy clubs in Selma or attacked mercilessly by police dogs. So many of the indelible images of the civil rights movement were born of the heavy air of Alabama. Today, half a century later, and after the election of an African American president, Oberlin College is proud to join Vassar College in offering a special tour of the places that shaped our nation’s collective conscience. Along the way, learn the history, relive the drama, and meet the people who were part of the great civil rights story in Alabama. Trace the footsteps of Martin Luther King Jr. and Sheriff Bull Connor. Meet survivors of the Selma violence and the family of one of the little girls killed in the Birmingham church bombing. You will see how Alabama and our

country has changed in the 54 years since Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus. The tour offers the best available accommodations in Birmingham and Montgomery, a private jazz recital and reception with artists in the Deep South’s best art galleries, and some of the finest soul food in Alabama.

For more information visit www.oberlin.edu/alumni/events/alumniTours.html.



Village Life In England’s Cotswolds

October 18–26, 2009

Escorted by Nicholas Jones, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences and Professor of English

Time has passed with a gentle hand over the rolling hills and small villages of England’s Cotswolds, a delightful region of lush pastoral landscapes, medieval castles, and deep-rooted cultural traditions. On this exclusive sojourn, you will immerse yourself in the heart of the English countryside and discover the region’s enchanting natural beauty and priceless historic treasures. Stroll across the fabled quads of Oxford, marvel at the grandeur of Gloucester Cathedral, and experience the traditions of villages like Broadway and Chipping Camden. Take a special private “behind-the-scenes” tour of Sir Winston Churchill’s birthplace at Blenheim Palace, hosted by Lord Charles Spencer-Churchill. Throughout your stay, you will enjoy charming accommodations at the Queen’s Hotel, a 150-year-old example of Regency-



style architecture situated amidst immaculately groomed gardens of Cheltenham. Our itinerary also features a program of lectures and presentations about regional art, history, and culture and a specially arranged village forum with local residents.

OBIEAdventures! San Juan Islands Sea Kayaking Expeditions

August 14-16, 2009 and August 21-23, 2009

Escorted by Roger Laushman, Associate Professor and Chair of Biology



Join other alumni on a low-cost, high-value kayaking trip! Due to the popularity of our sea kayaking expeditions in 2006, we will return to Washington State’s stunning San Juan Islands for two summer weekends of sea-kayaking, island camping, orcas, and eagles. Quiet and unobtrusive, double kayaks provide the perfect means for exploring the myriad forms of sea life we’ll encounter. Our adventure will include an orientation welcome dinner at the Friday Harbor Whale Museum. *Outdoor Magazine* calls our local outfitter’s trips one of its “10 favorite liquid adventures in the U.S.” We fully expect these trips to sell out quickly. No previous kayaking experience is needed. Brochure available.

Save the Date! COPPER CANYON & THE SEA OF CORTEZ: January 4-12, 2010 • THE GREAT JOURNEY THROUGH EUROPE: June 16-26, 2010 • ICELAND: THE LAND OF FIRE AND ICE: July 28-August 5, 2010. If you would like to receive electronic news and brochures about our programs, please call 440-775-8692 or e-mail alumni@oberlin.edu.



Oberlin College

2009 Commencement and Reunion Weekend

May 22-25, 2009

*Join us! Event and travel
information for alumni and
reunion classes can be found at:*

www.oberlin.edu/reunion

65th Reunion:

Classes of 1943, '44, '45

50th Reunion:

Class of 1959

35th Reunion:

Classes of 1973, '74, '75

25th Reunion:

Class of 1984

15th Reunion:

Classes of 1993, '94, '95



*Event and travel information
for parents and graduating seniors
can be found at:*

[www.oberlin.edu/
commencement](http://www.oberlin.edu/commencement)

Courtesy of Oberlin Athletics



Yeowomen Claim their First NCAC Championship

The Oberlin College women's track and field team tied Ohio Wesleyan to earn a share of the 2009 North Coast Athletic Conference Indoor Championship crown in March. The Yeowomen also matched their best-ever finish at the event by placing third. This is the first NCAC Indoor Championship for the Yeowomen and marks their highest finish at the event since 2000, when they placed second. Head Coach Ray Appenheimer was named NCAC Co-Coach of the Year, while senior Nicky Ouellet earned distance MVP honors.

For more visit www.goyeo.com/.

Oberlin's First Playwrights' Festival Packs the House

A lawyer who puts himself on trial for his wife's suicide is the focus of *Dark Matters*, a play written by Alex Huntsberger '09 and directed by Philip Waller '11. The production was one of two full-length one-act plays performed during Oberlin's first Playwrights' Festival from January 29 to February 15.

In all, the festival showcased works written and performed by about 10 students and included five OShorts—one-act plays presented by the Oberlin Student Theater Association—and an original musical staged by the Oberlin Musical Theater Association. The event opened with a packed house. "Last fall, we had open submissions and received a handful of works," co-producer Josh Sobel '09 says. "We provided feedback to the writers who were not chosen, and during winter term, we held weekly playwright workshops. We really wanted to foster support for playwrights."

For more, visit www.oberlin.edu/arts-and-sciences/departments/theater_dance/dance/.

Alex Huntsberger '09



Aaron Profumo '12 as Rufus in *Dark Matters*

Journaling the Putnam

A Student's View inside One Tough Math Competition

by Yvonne Gay Fowler

Kateryna Kuksenok '11 likes solving problems that "force an unconventional method of thought." For the past two years, she has been a member of the Oberlin team that competed in the regionals for the world's most prestigious computer programming contest sponsored by IBM.

Her next challenge would be the most prestigious collegiate mathematics competition in the nation: the William Lowell Putnam Mathematical Competition.

Each year, some 2,900 undergraduates from 450 colleges and universities take the six-hour exam comprised of 12 problems worth 10 points each. The level of difficulty usually results in students earning far less than half of the total credit, with the median at, or very close to, zero. None of this was enough to deter the 21 Oberlin students from taking part in the competition.

The experience earned a young Kuksenok an impressive 18 points, but not until she had experienced six weeks of doubt, anxiety, excitement, and relief, as revealed in a journal she kept while studying for the test.

"I suppose I can feel good about embarking on the true path of enlightenment," she wrote, "but, mostly, I can't help but be frustrated every time I get a problem almost-almost-right." **ATS**

For more of Kuksenok's journal, and to find out how the other students performed, visit www.oberlin.edu/oam.



Kateryna Kuksenok '11

Yvonne Gay Fowler

Three Oberlin students were recently named **Goldwater winners**. Oliver Pechenik '10, a mathematics major, plans to pursue a PhD in mathematics; Emily Olfson '10, a biology major, plans to pursue a PhD in molecular biology; and Jamie Wagner '10, a double major in biology and neuroscience, plans to pursue a PhD in neurobiology. Jaie Woodard, a third-year double-degree physics and French horn major, received honorable mention. She plans to pursue a PhD in physics. • **Oberlin was named among one of the nation's 50 "Best Value" private colleges and universities**, and the only college in Ohio selected for the *Princeton Review's* "Best Value" Colleges list for 2009. Oberlin ranked 36th (up four spots) in *Kiplinger's 2008-2009 Best Values in Private Colleges*.

• **PolyCultures: Food Where We Live**, a documentary film and multimedia production featuring footage from George Jones Farm and the farm's City Fresh program, premiered at the Cleveland International Film Festival in March. The film includes commentary by farm director Brad Masi '93, Professor David Orr, Emeritus Professor David Benzing, and farm manager Aaron Englander '06. • **Stewart A. Kohl '77** is one of four distinguished alumni from Ohio's independent colleges and universities who have been selected as members of the Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges Hall of Excellence. • **Oberlin's Bonner Center for Service and Learning** was honored for the third consecutive year with a place on the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for exemplary civic engagement and service to America's communities. • **Associate Director of Athletics Kiki Jacobs** is one of two individuals chosen from a Division III institution to participate in an NCAA Fellows Leadership Development Program. • **Nika Knight '09** was awarded a German academic exchange service internship. As one of 20 students from the U.S., Knight will study at the Freie Universität Berlin to explore Germany's culture, history, and current social and media climate, and take part in a five-week internship with a German newspaper, magazine, TV, or radio station.

Read more at www.oberlin.edu.

Advantage Women: Female Players Take to the Ice

by Harmony Pringle '11

A large group of Oberlin spectators crowded the rink, avidly watching the Plague's match against Case Western Reserve. They ceased their rowdy heckling and came together in a single chant: "Let the girls play! Let the girls play!" The captain turned to Dianne Hurvitz with a dubious look, "Do you want to play?" Hurvitz grinned briefly, then covered her face with her helmet.

That was in 2001, when Hurvitz '05, currently earning a master's of education degree at Oberlin, was one of two female players on the Oberlin Plague, the College's co-ed club ice hockey team. Now women account for seven of the 22 players—the highest number ever. And they aren't just plentiful, "they're really good," says faculty advisor Cortland Hill '77.

In the last decade, ice hockey has become one of the fastest growing female sports in the world. According to Canadian sports-writer Jamie Fitzpatrick, women played their first recorded hockey game more than a century ago, but participation declined



John Seyfried

Iliana Zamorska '10 awaits her turn on the ice during a February game against Wittenberg.

after WWII. The female sport didn't make a strong comeback in the U.S. until 1993, when the National Collegiate Athletic Association officially recognized the game.

The phasing in of women's hockey is visible in the continuum of experiences of many women on the Plague. Iliana Zamorska '10 of Connecticut, joined her high school varsity women's team after her figure skating coach broke the news that 5'10" was too tall for a female figure skater.

In contrast, first-year goalies Suzanne Herbst and Emma Karp have played nine and 11 years, respectively. Both began on youth leagues—Herbst in Vermont and Karp in New York—and later played on high school varsity teams. Karp also competed on a women's traveling league and considered playing in Division III.

But even for these veteran players, skating in the male-dominated arena of ice hockey brought its own struggles. As the only woman on her high school varsity team, Karp had to dress in a closet while the other players bonded in the locker room. Her coach even told male team members not to curse in front of her—special treatment that set her apart.

While Plague members share one locker room, playing on a co-ed team as a woman still has its challenges, namely, "the drive to prove yourself," says Zamorska.

"When I was in France last year, I didn't miss bagels or anything like that," she adds

OBERLIN GREENS: VEGGIE OIL 100% RECYCLED

Campus Dining Services (CDS) began recycling used food-grade oil in 2004. Today it recycles 100% of its oils to near-by George Jones Farm, Full Circle Fuels, and Calala's Water Haven, the only shrimp nursery in Ohio. Last school year, CDS recycled about 90 gallons of oil from Stevenson, Wilder, Dascomb, and Lord Saunders each week. The oil at Jones Farm is used to power farm equipment and a bio-fuel heater for its greenhouse. The farm also grows produce for CDS.

with a laugh. "I missed hockey. You get into a rhythm, and a certain time comes around and you want to be playing."

Club sports are student-initiated and student-governed activities. This year, Oberlin has 14 such clubs. **ATS**

Mediation Techniques to be Taught at High School

by Yvonne Gay Fowler

When members of the Oberlin College Dialogue Center met with local high school students this year to discuss issues surrounding disenfranchisement—programming stemming from Oberlin's first Poverty Symposium—talking came easy for the young participants. Realizing that they could discuss their ideas with adults and community leaders outside the classroom proved to be the challenge. They needed confidence, says Yeworkwa Belachew, the center's director. It was exactly what her peer-mediation program could provide.

Peer-mediation, a service provided by the Oberlin Dialogue Center, is a student-to-student conflict resolution program. In turn, student mediators gain communication and listening skills, the same tools needed to effectively express themselves.

"There is nothing more empowering for students than to be able to own the outcome of the process," says Belachew.

"A lot of students want to work things out for themselves," adds William Baylis, principal of the 390-student Oberlin High School. "Instead of [administrators] telling students what they should do, the student will be taking the initiative."

Training for Baylis, his assistant principal, three teachers, and any student who wishes to learn how to be a peer-mediator is scheduled to begin in January.

"We are thankful to President Krislov and Superintendent Geoff Andrews for their encouragements," says Belachew. **ATS**

To learn more about the Poverty Symposium visit www.oberlin.edu/oam.

WAVE MAKERS

Michael Fry '09

Major: Psychology

Hometown: Richfield, Ohio

Avocation: Jump rope champion and enthusiast

When Michael Fry was a third-grader, he witnessed something amazing—a team of young people were jumping rope, but it wasn't your typical turn the rope and jump. They were performing double dutch, an exercise that involves at least three athletes who take turns doing a series of jumping, gymnastics, and dancing moves as two ropes twirl at lightning speeds. Fry wasted little time trying out for the team. Although he had never jumped rope before, the coaches gave him a chance.

Now 23, Fry, a member of the Akron, Ohio, based Heartbeats, continues to be fascinated by the sport. For 10 years he has competed in double dutch freestyle, single rope pairs, speed jumping, and double dutch team contests, in places as far away as Belgium and South Korea.

"Jumping rope has given me great opportunities to share with others," he says, referring to a winter-term project he designed in January that led him to

several schools in Africa, including the Mkombozi Centre for Street Children in Tanzania and the Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa, Kenya. Armed with 200 ropes and instructional DVDs, Fry taught students there the art of jumping rope.

He hopes that his visit will lead to something more monumental—namely, having jump rope certified as an Olympic sport. Also a member of USA Jump Rope, Fry says the Olympic committee requires a minimum of 75 countries on four continents to sign on before any new sport is accepted. Thus far, more than 30 countries have signed up.

"Jumping rope brings people together because it promotes teamwork," he says.

Awards Earned: With Akron Heartbeats, Fry earned national championships in 2005 and 2006 and second in the 2006 World Cup meet. He also won a national competition for double dutch pairs, freestyle, in 2007. With Team USA, he won a gold medal in the junior mixed division in 2002 and took a silver medal in the 2004 grand masters competition. He was recently granted an Oberlin Creativity & Leadership Fellowship to start up national jump rope programs in Tanzania and Kenya.

—Marsha Bragg



Courtesy of Michael Fry '09

Boulder Statements

Laura Paxton, born and raised in Oberlin, launched her web site *Oberlin Rocks* (www.oberlinrocks.com) this past December to celebrate and commemorate the art and community news regularly slathered onto the stones in Tappan Square. So far, Paxton has gathered and posted more than 30 photos, ranging from talented high school art club reproductions of Picasso's *Old Guitar Player*, to anniversary announcements, and of course, three different Obama rocks (rock the vote, perhaps?). Paxton also includes the rocks' history—two were placed in monument to the classes of 1882 and 1898, and the third, a chunk of gneissoid granite from Erie County, to honor Oberlin founders John J. Shipherd and Philo P. Stewart, unveiled at Oberlin College's centennial in 1933. Since 1962, when they were painted as giant Easter eggs, the rocks have served as

Oberlin's sacred stones, carrying news of the events and relationships in the lives of those who, like the stones, circle Tappan Square. If you have pictures of the rocks, e-mail them with dates and descriptions to Entries@oberlinrocks.com with *Entry* in the subject line.

Party Politics

We all know to eat our vegetables, but what about eating with them? **Emily Doubilet** '06 serves up a series of delectable, disposable dishes (*below*) on the web site of her new company, Sustainable Party (sustainableparty.com), explaining, "We love a good party. We want the next generation to love them, too." Doubilet's partyware is completely compostable—from the corn cups to the plant-starch cutlery. She's even working on an "After Party Take Back Program," so users can

ship their dirty dishes back to the company to be composted professionally. To complement your leafy salads, Sustainable Party carries VerTerra wear, a state-of-the-art series of plates and bowls pressed out of fallen leaves. But Doubilet is peddling more than just products; she's sharing ideas. At sustainableparty.com, you can download a free "best practices guide" with tips to organize your own green party.

obie blog watch

BLOGGER:

Jeremy Denk '90, doing blogger business as Think Denk

TAGLINE:

The glamorous life and thoughts of a concert pianist

URL:

jeremydenk.net/blog

SAMPLE:

"This week brought fresh revelations that the Boston Symphony, among many leading organizations, is heavily leveraged in atonal credit swaps, more than the most pessimistic theorists had previously forecast."
—From a March 19 satirical posting called "Leveraged."



Oberlin's Stamp on History

Although we haven't checked the archives to confirm, we're pretty sure that the class of 1884 has the highest rate of appearances on U.S. postage stamps of all Oberlin classes.

Anna Julia Cooper and **Mary Church Terrell**, two of Oberlin's earliest African American female graduates, were inducted into the United States Postal Service's (USPS) Civil Rights Pioneers and Black Heritage stamp series. The February release of the Civil Rights Pioneers stamp collection featured Terrell among other civil rights leaders; in June, Cooper will become the 32nd inductee into the USPS's Black Heritage stamp series.

Mary Church Terrell was a journalist, activist, educator, and driving force behind the African American women's suffrage movement. Born in 1863 in Memphis, Tennessee, to former slaves, Terrell earned

a bachelor's degree in classics at Oberlin in 1884 and a master's degree four years later. While at Oberlin, she made her mark, writing for and editing the *Oberlin Review*.

Anna Julia Cooper was an educator, scholar, feminist, and activist who gave voice to the African American community during the 19th and 20th centuries. She tirelessly fought for social justice and civil rights for African American women, young people, and the poor through her scholarship, community outreach, and innovative educational leadership. She is best known for her educational leadership, her challenges to the racist notion that African Americans were naturally inferior, and her 1892 groundbreaking collection of essays and speeches, *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman of the South*. Born into slavery around 1858 in Raleigh, North Carolina, Cooper entered Oberlin College in 1881 and earned a degree in mathematics in 1884.

At least two other Oberlin alumni can be found on U.S. postage stamps: Nobel Prize winner and physicist **Robert Millikan**, class of 1891, appeared on a 37 cent stamp issued in 1982. In 1968 the U.S. postal service issued a 50 cent stamp featuring pioneering feminist activist **Lucy Stone**, class of 1847, as part of its Prominent Americans Issue.



Blair Waldorf, Class of 2013?

Many alumni were surprised and amused to hear their alma mater name-dropped on CW network's *Gossip Girl* earlier this year when the evil-doing character Blair Waldorf's plans for attending Yale are

torpedoed by her evil-doing. "It turns out," she says, "I can still get into Oberlin."

One alumnus not surprised about the reference was **Lenn Rosenfeld '01**. He co-wrote the episode.

"Oberlin is a big part of who I am, and is largely responsible for my moving to L.A. a week after graduation and taking the plunge into the biz. So any chance I get to give Oberlin a shout out, I do it," he explains.

But does he really think Blair and Oberlin are a good match?

"There's a place at Oberlin for all different kinds of people—even the Blair Waldorfs of this world," says Rosenfeld, who's been with the show since it began two seasons ago. "That's what makes Oberlin, Oberlin."



Yeobook

Barack, a picture book written by **Jonah Winter '84** and published by HarperCollins, was one of three books about Barack Obama that shared space on the *New York Times*' picture book best seller list following Obama's inauguration. Winter has written books for children about musicians Benny Goodman and Dizzy Gillespie, artist Frida Kahlo, boxer Muhammed Ali, and baseball players Roberto Clemente and Sandy Koufax, among others. He has also written books of poetry for grown-ups, including the collection *Amnesia*, which was published by Oberlin College Press after winning the 2003 FIELD Poetry Prize.

Lillie Chilen '08, Aisha Hadlock '10, Jeff Hagan '86 and Harmony Pringle '11 contributed to Oberlin beyond Oberlin.

A Mid-Winter's Daydream

An Oberlin senior's winter term took her to Indonesia—and someplace farther.

By Katharine Sontag '09

I feel at least once a day like I am in a dream. I wake up to sounds of roosters at 4:30 in the morning. I eat at least nine bananas a day. I watch the same soap opera every night in a language I don't understand. I hike all the time, sometimes in groups and sometimes alone. Everyone asks, "Where are you going?" *Jalan jalan*, we answer: Just taking a walk.

The clouds are so beautiful here. Once I sat and wrote about them all morning. I've only done that once before, and it was on a plane. Then I was in a cloud and now I am in a cloud, too, but not because I'm in a large machine that flies in the sky but because we are just really high up all the time here in Indonesia. When it's about to rain, the clouds blend into one massive fog. It rains at least once a day, sometimes all day and night but usually just really hard for a little while. There are only two seasons here: dry and rainy. January is the heart of the rainy season.

I never thought to go to Indonesia. My senior winter term was going to be about "my future." That's all anyone talked about. Then it poured a flood of applications, cover letters, important decisions and I found myself drowning in it all. I got an e-mail from the Community Service Resource Center, part of the College's Bonner Center for Service and Learning, and the name Mark

Merrett was on it. Mark is the father of Sam Merrett '05, the founder of Full Circle Fuels, Oberlin's first alternative fuel station. Mark's e-mail said he was taking six students to Nusa Penida, an island off the coast of Bali where he had a house, to work on community projects. I applied. I wanted to see another way to live, because this one was overwhelming me. So I joined Sara Schaffer '10, Andrew Fenster '11, Trevor Rhoads '10, Rebecca Uhlman '12, and Cory Boberg '10.

Now that I'm here, I've forgotten about all the practical things that dictate life at home, like money, work, stress, and caffeine. I drink tea, but it is weak and has a pound of sugar in it. I don't use sugar at home, but here the sweetness is so sweet you can't bear to give it up. All of my senses are amplified. Or maybe I'm just listening to them more or finally listening to them at all. Even the most mundane of acts—showering, eating, walking, and sleeping—have taken on new significance for me. I'm learning all the time. Everyone, American and Indonesian, teaches me something new just through our interactions. We discuss personal and important things, such as deep-seated religious beliefs and traumatic experiences. I am able to be open here, both with my fellow Oberlin students and our new Indonesian

FOUR DECADES BEYOND THE CL



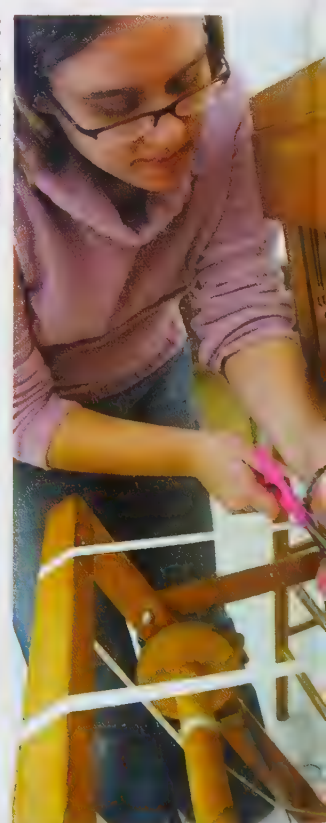
Leo Charette



Samantha Lansford '09



Gabriele Johnson '09



Madalyn Berg '12



Yvonne Gay Fowler





Katharine Sontag, back row, second from left, in Indonesia with new friends.

friends. We work together, carrying heavy stones to build the base of a village shrine; we eat together at the village *warong*; and we just hang out together, talking, laughing, sometimes even singing and dancing.

Sara and I teach English every other day for an hour. It doesn't seem like much, but our planning is easily quadruple the amount of time we actually teach. Our students range from a young 4 to an old 13. Sometimes there are 30 and sometimes there are 12, it just depends on who feels like coming. We never know what activities will click and which ones will fall apart. They love "duck, duck, goose," and they greet us in English all the time now.

Last night we donned our sarongs and waist scarves and traveled all around the island in two pickup trucks, each packed with people—six Americans and the rest of the youth of the village. The air was so nourishing. We sang Indonesian songs and felt everything so intensely. We went from temple to temple. We

"I wanted to see another way to live, because this one was overwhelming me."

stopped and prayed at each one. I have never prayed before but I have become accustomed to it: Kneel on the stone floor, right hand cupped over left, drink the water splashed into your hands three times, and toss it over your head on the fourth. Pick the rice from the basket in front of you, place some on your head and some on your neck. The priest murmurs a prayer. Now you are blessed.

That was our last night. We tried so hard to soak up as much as we could. It didn't matter that we got home at midnight and would awake in six hours. We never wanted to leave. We never wanted to wake up from what could only feel like a dream.

Back home, the elation of Nusa Penida stayed with me for about two weeks. My body was here, but my mind was in Indonesia. I wasn't worried. I wasn't stressed, even when I had cause to be. But I had to re-assimilate into this world in order to function within it. Mark, who travels back and forth all the time, told me this would happen, but that I would still be changed, even just a little bit. I think he's right. ●

To see more pictures from Katharine's winter term in Indonesia, visit www.oberlin.edu/alummag/spring2009.

Katharine Sontag '09, an English major from Yonkers, is thinking about becoming a writer.

CLASSROOM: WINTER TERM TURNS 40

For four decades, winter term has presented Oberlin students the opportunity to explore interests beyond the classroom, often something beyond their usual interest or comfort zone, and sometimes well beyond the ordinary. This year was no exception, as 2,350 students fanned out across town and across the world.

1 Oberlin students from the Business Scholars program, who met with business leaders in New York, Boston, and Cleveland, practice tying double-Windsor necktie knots as part of a "Dress for Success" seminar at Brooks Brothers in New York. **2** Jo Ling Goh '09, Emmanuel Magara '11, and Lechi "Fox" Zhang '12, also part of the Business Scholars program, in New York City. **3** Vegan "Monster Cookies" baked by Gabriele Johnson '09, who spent winter term sharpening her cooking skills while studying the science of vegan cooking. (For recipe and cooking tips, visit her blog: <http://vegancooking101.blogspot.com>.) **4** Meredith "Cubby" Dimling '11 and Alison Karasyk '12, among the eight Oberlin students who studied sustainable design in the Netherlands with professors Susan Umbenhour and Don Harvey in a project called "Oberlin SlowLab," on a walk toward a beach they never quite reached (read about the cranberry bog that blocked the route and other adventures of the trip at <http://slowlaboberlin.blogspot.com>). **5** Joanna Johnson '11 and Ria Richardson '09, who spent January in the biology lab, apply primary antibody to opossum uterus tissue, a step in the process of staining the tissue to observe progesterone receptors. **6** Jordan King '11, Ian Seeley '11, and George Omos '10, interns in Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's Washington, D.C., office for winter term, pose with Pelosi's chief of staff John Lawrence '70, Sandra Hodge, Oberlin College's special assistant for community and government relations, and President Marvin Krislov. **7** Ondrea Keith '10, one of 10 students who took part in the project "From Yarn to Garment," for which they were to design and create at least one wearable garment, is shown trimming the thread on the fabric she made.

■ See the back cover for a photo taken during the Oberlin Conservatory Symphony Orchestra's winter term West Coast tour.

Reframing the Big Box

Visiting Professor Julia Christensen takes a look at what happens once the big box empties out.

By Kris Ohlson



Six years ago, Julia Christensen noticed that someone was finally doing something with one of two abandoned Wal-Mart stores in her hometown of Bardstown, Kentucky.

In Bardstown, as in other places around the country, Wal-Mart had expanded its operations by shedding its big box husks and building other, bigger stores elsewhere—leaving behind massive parking lots and all the complicated infrastructure created to power the buildings, regulate traffic, and handle water and sewage needs. One of the empty Wal-Mart stores had been demolished to make way for a courthouse. Christensen wondered if other communities saddled with abandoned big box stores were figuring out new uses for them.

Her curiosity led her on a multi-year, 75,000-mile odyssey around the country, where she discovered communities transforming their big boxes into libraries, indoor racetracks, museums, and more. Her book, *Big Box Reuse*, published by MIT Press, is not only garnering lots of attention but is also contributing to the national dialogue about such issues as public space and sustainability. The book is also part of the American Association of Academic Presses “Best Of” academic books exhibition, which is traveling internationally through April 2010. Christensen, who has a joint appointment in the College and Conservatory as Oberlin’s Luce Visiting Professor of the Emerging Arts, calls the whole project an intersection of art and research.

“It started as a video and photography project,” she says. “Then it grew into a storytelling project. Universities and city councils and other groups asked me to come and talk about my research, so it became a lecture. Then people started to say that these stories needed to be written down, and it became a book.”

Like the big box reuse project, Christensen herself defies neat categorization. She’s a photographer with works in several concurrent shows, including a touring exhibition called *Worlds Away: New Suburban Landscapes* that has traveled from the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis to the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, and is currently at the Yale University School of Architecture Galleries. Her new media, video, and installation work has been shown at the Lincoln Center in New York, the Miller Gallery at Carnegie Mellon University, and other venues. She’s played and performed music all her life and is the director of WAAM!, the Women and Art Music Ensemble at the Conservatory. She’s an actress who’s been part of The Yes Men, a group that “exposes, perhaps deviously, the nastiness of powerful evildoers.” When it was time for her to declare a major at Bard College, nothing encompassed all her interests, so she helped create a major in integrated arts.

“I’ve always had a passion to open passageways between the arts,” Christensen says. “Coming to Oberlin was a magical thing for me. I’ve been able to pull from my varied background and create a curriculum that both fills gaps at the school and allows me to be me.”

Last fall, Christensen’s course *Land Arts of an Electronic Age* drew students from a variety of disciplines to study ways in which contemporary artists connect with and interpret the environment. The students took a three-day field trip to Gary, Indiana, where they explored the vast industrial wasteland left by the waning steel industry. They followed up with research and an artistic response: kinetic sculpture, poetry, dance, an interactive

Left: A closed Wal-Mart store in Twinsburg, Ohio. Left inset, below center, and below right: Julia Christensen’s photographs documenting former K-mart stores that were given new lives as a Spam Museum in Austin, Minn., a Head Start program in Hastings, Neb., and a library, museum, and cafe in Lebanon, Mo.





“There are hundreds and hundreds of these empty big box buildings ... so it’s not like they just go away.”

Julia Christensen

audio installation, and more, all displayed in a November show at Oberlin’s Fisher Gallery.

“The class opened my eyes to a whole new way of exploring the environment and our place in it,” says environmental studies major Margaret Kent. “It was unlike any other class I’ve taken at Oberlin.”

Christensen thinks that same phenomenon—the way the arts give people a different way to look at issues—lies behind the success of Big Box Reuse. When she visited communities to photograph and capture the stories of their big box projects, they opened right up.

“I’m an artist—not someone from city council or a corporation, not someone they see as having an agenda,” she says. “And when I frame their work as a creative act, it’s very empowering and exciting for them.”

It’s also exciting for communities who are stuck with abandoned big box stores to see potential in the hangar-sized monsters in their midsts. Christensen has received so many calls and e-mails from people looking for the resources to launch similar projects that she created a wiki web site, Wikireuse, where people can post their ideas and questions. So the Big Box Reuse project is not only reflecting change, it’s helping effect it, too.

“There are hundreds and hundreds of these empty big box buildings,” Christensen says. “Most of the buildings in the book were put up in the 1960s, so it’s not like they just go away. My hope is that maybe we can alter the construction of them, and that design issues can go into the hands of communities, rather than corporations.” ●

Kris Ohlson is a freelance writer in Cleveland.



Students in Christensen’s Land Arts in an Electronic Age class during their tour of Gary, Ind., and its environs.

From Our Town to Your Town, Inc.



Carnegie Mellon exhibit and MIT Press book built on Oberlin foundation



The UnBox, the central installation of the Your Town, Inc.: Julia Christensen exhibit at Carnegie Mellon's Miller Gallery, was built by the artist with help from Oberlin student interns last summer and designed with an ethos exactly the opposite of that behind the big box.

"The UnBox was built of locally milled wood, and we never entered a big box store in order to build it," says Christensen. "We only bought materials and tools at local stores, including Oberlin's Ben Franklin, Watson's Hardware Store, and Dave's Army/Navy. It is modular—a 1,500-square-foot structure that folds up into a box of about 5-by-9-by-6 feet, with shelves and tunnels and screens that fold out." The structure, she adds, was carted from Oberlin to Pittsburgh by Sam Merrett '05 in a vegetable-oil-powered truck.

Your Town, Inc. also featured photographs from the MIT Press book Big Box Reuse. The book had its major launch at the Carnegie Mellon gallery in November.

The Re-Purpose Driven Life: An OAM request for photos

"Adaptive reuse" is a term used for taking often obsolete or unwanted objects and giving them new purpose through a few creative adaptations. For instance, a pair of broad, old-fashioned water skis can find new life as sleek shelving, or discarded palates can be transformed into garden sheds. Adaptive reuse keeps useable material from the landfill and lessens the need to make and buy new.

If you've taken on such a project, we'd like to see it. Take a digital picture of what you've created (or rather re-created) and e-mail it to us at alum.mag@oberlin.edu. We'll publish pictures of some of the best in a future issue of OAM.

Pictured: an old crate-turned-outdoor-bar created by OAM editor Jeff Hagan '86, with the help of an antique sign given to him by Peter Jacobson '86.



LIVING

The most popular unknown playwright around, Rich Orloff mines the universe for humor.

By Tom Nugent

One afternoon back in the late 1980s, a very funny man named Richard Orloff sat down at his desk and asked himself the following question:

What if the entire universe is just some nerd's science project?

Because Rich Orloff '73 is a comic playwright, his answer to that question eventually became *The Whole Shebang*—an award-winning and often-produced one-act play in which two ordinary human beings (Harvey and Edna, from Dayton, Ohio) discover that “the heavens and the earth” are actually nothing more than a college nerd's desperate attempt to earn a decent grade in a science course.

For the wildly unpredictable Orloff—an increasingly popular playwright whose wacky and often deliciously irreverent comedies have received more than 600 stagings—*The Whole Shebang* was a splendid opportunity to do what he does best: make theater audiences laugh their guts out.

Recently described by the *New York Times* as “rip-roaringly funny,” the once-upon-a-time TV sitcom writer has spent most of the past two decades assembling more than 70 plays (many are sketches or one-acters) aimed at turning audience expectations on their heads while also evoking howls of unrestrained laughter.

Ask Orloff a serious question about the “themes that inform” his plays, and he'll stare at you like you just arrived from Jupiter.

“Sorry, but I never ask myself questions like that when I'm writing,” he'll tell you with a groan. “That's the kind of question a theater professor might ask, but not me. What I do is to simply imagine a situation, often sparked by a thought that tickles me or a bit of dialogue that pops into my head.

“After that, I ask myself one of the most important questions in the world of theater: ‘Will this situation play? Will it make an audience laugh? Can I find the humor that's potentially contained in that situation, if I work at it hard enough?’”

Quite frequently, he can. During more than 30 years of entertaining TV viewers and theatergoers on six continents (his comedy *Oy!* was a recent hit in Bulgaria), the endlessly innovative Orloff has learned that one of the best ways to get a laugh (and



Rich Orloff, right, with student Andrew Mooney '09 at the Feve, downtown Oberlin.

“I think what's unusual about me as a playwright is that I've had this really strange, under-the-radar kind of career. I'm not a household name in the theater by any means ... and yet almost every week they're doing a play or two of mine somewhere. And when I do the math, I realize, oh my God, I actually am making a life out of this.”

FOR A LAUGH

this man lives for laughs) is to “turn the audience’s expectations back on itself” in a comic reversal.

Visit Orloff’s web site (www.richorloff.com), for example, and you’ll quickly notice an intriguing menu choice that promises a revealing look “inside the playwright’s head.” Click on that item and you’ll find a nicely detailed set of x-rays of the playwright’s teeth.

That’s vintage Orloff, and nowhere does his knack for crafting zany one-liners shine more brightly than in *The Whole Shebang*, an outrageous comic extravaganza which so far has been produced more than 100 times around the world, including for broadcast on A&E (and which also earned inclusion in *The Best American Short Plays*, 1994-1995).

In *Shebang*, Orloff launches the mother of all comic reversals—a scenario in which two ordinary humans from Dayton (still clad in their nighttime pajamas) are unexpectedly summoned to meet their maker.

Imagine their surprise when Harvey and Edna discover that their creator is actually a science nerd in another dimension who invented their entire cosmos as his end-of-the-semester project. Appalled and terrified, the duo struggle to come to terms with the fact that they’re actually nothing more than a glorified term paper:

Harvey: Uh, can I ask you a question?

Student: Yes?

Harvey: Who the hell are you, and why are we here?

Student: Well, since you asked, my roommate teleported through a warp in dimensional barriers to Dayton, Ohio, where he realigned your molecules into a pure energetic code. Then he teleported you here and, having analyzed your cellular structure and DNA, re-atomized you into this dimension.

Harvey: Yeah, I figured it was something like that.

Student: Don’t worry. This is just what, in our dimension, is the equivalent of one of your universities. These [two onlookers] are professors in my department, and I’m a student. You’re just here as part of my project.

Harvey: Oh, yeah? And what’s your project?

Student: I created the heavens and the earth.

(It takes a moment for this to fully sink in on the humans.)

Harvey: Wait a second. Are you telling us that you’re—

Student: I am who I am.

Edna: Sounds like him.

Harvey: You mean to tell us that, like, the universe is just like . . . a science fair project?

Student: More or less.

Harvey: Suddenly I feel so cheap.

One of America’s most popular unknown playwrights?

Spend a few hours hanging out with Orloff and you’ll soon discover that one of his favorite comedic targets is himself.

“I think what’s unusual about me as a playwright is that I’ve had this really strange, under-the-radar kind of career,” he says over a cup of coffee at the Feve Bar and Grill in Oberlin. “I’ve yet to have a big break on Broadway, off-Broadway, or even at a major regional theater, but many of my plays have become enormously popular at smaller professional theaters and amateur groups, on college campuses, and at high schools all around the country.

“I’m not a household name in the theater by any means . . . and yet almost every week they’re doing a play or two of mine somewhere. And when I do the math, I realize, oh my God, I actually am making a life out of this.

“I’m probably one of the most popular unknown playwrights in America today.”

Orloff isn’t exaggerating. As the winner of several regional and national awards for playwriting, he’s earned high praise from critics over the years for dozens of side-splitting comedies ranging from sketches to full-length works. Among the most widely-produced plays are such gems as the one-act farce *Oedi*, “a retelling of the Oedipus Rex story, which focuses on the fact that if Oedipus married his mother, she had to be old enough to be his mother. It’s sort of Sophocles meets the Marx Brothers”; *Oy!*, “a collection of 12 (but for you, 13) short comedies, a comic tribute to all things Jewish and all things human”; and the sketch *At the Orgy*, a parody of Abbott and Costello’s classic routine *Who’s On First?*, featuring a novice at an orgy trying to get to the bottom of the question, “Who’s on top?”

One of his own favorites is *Domestic Tranquility*, a full-length comedy about a trio of escaped convicts who hide in a family’s home and are driven nuts by the family. (Other than the part about the escaped convicts, Orloff claims it’s autobiographical.)

After success in TV, he left it all behind

Born and raised in Chicago as the fourth and youngest child of a hardworking trade show manager and a stay-at-home mom who together maintained a “classic, mid-20th century, middle-class home,” Orloff arrived at Oberlin in the fall of 1969. Shy and self-critical, he was interested in theater but had trouble connecting with “an extremely avant-garde theater program in which everything seemed to be very dark and edgy, but they didn’t seem too interested in such basics as character development and writing effective dialogue.

"I took a few theater courses," Orloff says, "but nothing seemed to really click. It was very intense, but so far out. When one student wrote a play about giving birth to a refrigerator, everybody in the program loved it. That wasn't for me. So instead of writing plays, I decided to have a go at comic essays."

Eager to develop his writing skills, in the summer before his junior year Orloff wrote four sample humorous op-ed essays, hoping to earn a spot as a columnist on the *Oberlin Review*. Marcie Berman, the editorial page editor at the time, rejected three of them. But she liked his parody of the then-popular novel *Love Story* by Erich Segal.

"Amazingly enough, people read it and laughed!" Orloff says now. "So I wrote another piece, which the *Review* also published, and another and another, and by the end of the school year the *Review* had published over 20 of my pieces. It was the first time I realized that my sense of humor actually had value."

"I'd go into the dining hall before dinner, and as people were opening the *Review*, some of them were looking to see if there was something of mine in there, which was thrilling enough. But then I'd see them reading it and laughing out loud, and that was just wonderful. Today, when I tell people that I love Oberlin, that's one of the stories I tell them in order to explain why."

"Of course, losing my virginity is a close second."

After earning his degree in 1973—a watershed year that marked the end of U.S. participation in the Vietnam War—and after a short stint as a newspaper reporter, Orloff moved to Los Angeles, where within a few years he began writing for such sitcoms as *Three's Company*, *Mama's Family*, and *Flo*.

After a few years beneath the California palm trees, however, the Chicago transplant realized he wasn't happy. As a matter of fact, he hated his life.

"Basically, I woke up one day and realized that I was miserable writing for television," he recalls. "That experience taught me a great deal about the discipline of scriptwriting, but I rarely enjoyed writing for the shows I was given an opportunity to write for, and by the time I was working, the kind of groundbreaking sitcoms I admired (*All in the Family*, *the Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *M*A*S*H*), were no longer being produced."

"In most of the jobs I had, I would write scripts and hand them in, and the producers would say: 'We're sorry, Rich, but we don't like this and we're gonna rewrite it completely.' Or else they would say: 'Oh, Rich, this is absolutely fantastic—and we're still gonna rewrite it completely.'"

After a few years, Orloff grew weary of working with other writers on scripts that included relatively little of his own individual creativity. "I remember one show that was seen by millions of people, and I remember sitting around a table with six other writers, revising a script of mine—and I was so bored that I was just counting the hours to the end of the day. I was making a good living, but I didn't feel alive."

By the mid-1980s, Orloff had had enough, and he began writing plays. "My inner voice always told me, 'You're a playwright.'" Hoping to further both his career and his craft, he moved to New York in 1988. It was slow going at first, he says. "I got an incredible number of rejection slips, and there were days when I wondered if I'd be able to hang on. But I stayed with it. By then, I

believed I had talent. What took time was developing my craft."

Orloff says he got a "major boost" in his change of vocation from his beloved alma mater. Always active in alumni affairs (he's been both a class president and class agent), he was fascinated to learn that the College planned to sponsor a special theme reunion weekend focusing on campus life during the tumultuous years of the Vietnam War (1965-74). Deeply interested, Orloff volunteered to write a script for the event. "I was delighted—or perhaps more accurately, amazed—that both the Alumni Association and the theater department decided to support the project. I was still an unproven playwright, but Oberlin believed in me."

On Orloff's behalf, the Alumni Association sent a letter to everyone who graduated between 1964 and 1974, requesting they write him about their Vietnam-era campus experiences. Orloff received more than 100 letters. In addition he sought out campus activists from the time and spent days reading back issues of the *Review*.

The result was a full-length play about the war years, which won rave reviews on campus in 1989. After a second production the following year, Orloff rewrote the script (now titled *Vietnam 101: The War On Campus*). In December 2008, Orloff returned to campus to watch a platoon of Oberlin undergraduate actors bring that era alive. [See page 23.]

"For me, putting together the Vietnam play at Oberlin in the late 1980s was one of those happy accidents that can change your life," says the playwright today. "That experience, which was quite challenging and grueling at times, forced me to teach myself about the structure of plays ... about dramatic architecture and the importance of cause and effect in theater, and the need to think not just about plot but to take the audience on a journey."

Divorced in 2001 ("awful marriage, great material"), Orloff inhabits a cramped one-bedroom apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side. "The bedroom is barely larger than the bed," he says with a chuckle, "but the living room is large enough that I can make one part of it an office and another part a living room. Very Manhattan."

When involved with a production, Orloff's life is filled with auditions, rehearsals, meetings, and often revisions at all hours. "As a playwright, my work week can vary significantly from leisurely researching and mulling over a new play idea or being immersed in the world of writing a first draft to the very different focus it takes to rewrite a play, be in rehearsal, or deal with the business side."

Inverting the usual snobbery with which the theater treats television, Orloff aspires to hone his craft the way the best TV writers have.

"Whatever talent I have is a gift, not an achievement, but I take great pride in my sense of craft," he says. "Sitcom writers like Norman Lear, Larry Gelbart, and James L. Brooks are my heroes. Their shows not only had great wit; at their best, they explored what was comedic about all situations in life—including situations that we don't normally think of as funny."

"In my own small way, I'm trying to live up to that standard by creating plays that succeed at making audiences laugh, even as they seek to articulate something insightful about what it means to be human." ●

Tom Nugent is a freelance writer in Hastings, Mich.



Oberlin and the Economy

To the Oberlin College Community:

These are the most challenging economic times in recent memory. No one can say for certain when economic growth and the financial markets will begin recovering. But history tells us they will. History also gives me confidence that Oberlin College will emerge from this downturn stronger.

It is important for us to keep in mind that previous generations of Oberlinians confronted even greater challenges. They overcame them by defending the values on which our College stands: the relentless dedication to achieving academic, artistic, and musical excellence; the steadfast commitment to inclusion, diversity, and access to Oberlin's excellence; and the unwavering conviction that an Oberlin education is special, that its rigorous, interdisciplinary nature teaches young women and men to succeed in any endeavor they choose.

These values are personified by the generations of alumni I meet on my travels. Whether the person is young or old, living in Houston, Chapel Hill, New York, or Istanbul, the common threads of their Oberlin experience—close faculty-student ties; enduring, active friendships with Oberlin peers and fellow alums of all ages; love of learning; and determination to improve the world—shine through. Through wars, depression, and recessions, through times lean or flush, these Oberlin values endure.

I have been continually reminded of the attributes that make Oberlin special. Many visitors—scholars, experts, and alumni from around the world—who sit in on or lecture to our classes, tell our faculty members afterward how impressed they are with our students, especially the level of student involvement. Several visiting scholars have remarked that Oberlin students obviously care deeply about the subjects they study, that they are informed, articulate, enthusiastic, and eager to debate ideas. That is high and unsolicited praise for Oberlin. One hears similar comments from Oberlin faculty members. I, too, have witnessed this deep level of student engagement in the constitutional law and politics classes I teach.

I am proud to say that Oberlin remains committed to providing access to worthy students who meet our high standards. We remain committed to our mission of pursuing academic, artistic, and musical excellence. And we remain convinced that a liberal arts education at Oberlin teaches students to master new challenges, to hone their analytical skills, and to develop the multifaceted, international perspective needed to flourish in the 21st century. To defend these values, we rely upon your continued support. No group of individuals better understands the life-changing nature of an Oberlin education than you, our alumni.

Times are tough. But it is more important than ever to provide our extraordinary educational opportunities to future generations of Oberlin students from every walk of life. My senior staff and I have created the following list of questions and answers to explain how Oberlin has been affected by the current economic downturn, and how we are working to reduce expenditures college-wide. History tells us that if we work hard together and remain true to our values, we will weather this downturn, and Oberlin will be better still when recovery comes.

Marvin Krislov
President

1: How is Oberlin affected by the economic downturn?

Oberlin, like other colleges and universities, is coping with the dramatic declines in global equity markets over the past 12 months. The sharp drop in prices of stocks and other financial assets has eroded the support that Oberlin's operating budget receives from its endowment. The economic slump is having a deleterious effect on the total amount of philanthropic giving to Oberlin from alumni, friends, and institutions, many of whom have reduced somewhat the gifts they are able to make in this economy.

Thus, the College's major sources of revenue—net student fees, endowment support, and annual giving—are all likely to decline or to grow at a much slower pace than the College had expected. We must now carefully position Oberlin's assets to weather the current economic crisis while planning for a clearly different financial future in the short and possibly longer term.

2: What is the College doing to address issues caused by the downturn?

We are taking a number of steps to reduce the operating costs of the College, many of which President Krislov has already communicated to the campus community. There will be no salary increases for Oberlin's faculty or administrative and professional staff next year. The College will significantly reduce its expenditures in such areas as printing, publications, postage, professional fees, and travel. We will continue to look for ways to further reduce expenditures across the institution.

Oberlin went through an intensive strategic planning process in 2004-05. In that process, we learned that while no one can predict the future, we can build in financial flexibility to deal with uncertainty and risk. In the short term, the senior administration will strategically reduce budgets in a manner that will have minimal impact on our programs and operation. Our top priorities remain preserving Oberlin's academic mission and maintaining our commitments to excellence and access.

Our near-term reductions will give Oberlin's leadership the time necessary to evaluate issues and priorities and communicate those findings to our faculty, students, parents, staff, and alumni.

Given the economic situation at this time, a further series of reductions is inevitable. The reductions will require a participatory process involving many groups in the Oberlin community. This process will be time consuming and emotional, and will require a great deal of leadership and patience to be successful. In the longer term, the president will engage faculty and staff councils in discussions, and they will make recommendations on how we might further reduce spending. We will also look to the larger community for ideas and suggestions. Individual faculty, staff, students, parents, and alumni are encouraged to contribute their ideas for reducing spending.

3: Will there be layoffs?

Higher education is very labor-intensive; approximately 70 percent of Oberlin's operating budget goes to salaries, wages, and related benefits. Fortunately, at this juncture, any reduction in staffing expenditures will happen through vacancy savings (i.e. delaying the replacement of employees who retire or resign) and not layoffs. While future years may require additional reductions in staffing, that option would be a last resort.

4: Is there a hiring freeze at Oberlin?

No. But as noted above, certain positions will remain vacant. In tough financial times, some positions are more vital than others in fulfilling our mission as a premier institution of higher education. As an ongoing practice, division heads will determine on a case-by-case basis whether vacated positions need to be filled immediately. Only positions deemed critical to the educational mission, required to fulfill contractual obligations, or that will produce positive financial payback will be filled. Currently, most faculty tenure-track searches are continuing for the next academic year.

5: As of June 30, 2008, the College's endowment was nearly \$750 million. Even factoring in declines, why can't more endowment money be used to address our financial issues?

The value of our endowment has declined significantly since June 2008; we are currently projecting it to be in the \$500 million range as of June 30, 2009. In conjunction with the reductions in operating costs taken so far, the Board of Trustees has approved a temporary increase in the endowment payout above our financial plan for the upcoming year. This will provide sufficient time to do the careful planning required to strengthen Oberlin's academic programs while making further cost reductions. However, increasing endowment spending over an extended period of time when financial markets are at their lowest levels in years would seriously undermine the College's long-term financial health.

6: Did Oberlin's endowment decline due to poor investment management? How does our performance compare to that of peer schools?

Each college or university pursues its own investment strategy. Our endowment performance compares favorably to our benchmarks and to our peer schools. Last year our endowment was down less than 2 percent. The prior year, our endowment generated a return of 22 percent. Current assumptions include flat returns through June 2010 with modest growth in the following two years. Oberlin's Investment Committee, which manages the endowment, spent the past several years assessing the risks of Oberlin's investment portfolio. Unlike some of our peer institutions, Oberlin has ample liquidity to meet its needs.

7: Did the College have any investments with Bernie Madoff, Stanford Financial, or Westridge Capital Management?

No.

8: Shouldn't Oberlin stop renovating campus facilities and building new ones? Wouldn't that save money?

Many colleges and universities have announced plans to reduce or suspend large construction projects. Oberlin is fortunate to have acquired long-term bond funding at favorable interest rates and major donor support for significant capital projects such as the Litoff Building, North Professor Street Student Housing, and the renovation of the HVAC and storage areas of the Allen Memorial Art Museum. It is in the College's best interest for these major projects to stay on track, as they take years to plan and build. Bond funding is project specific; we can't simply transfer funds from bond issues to other purposes or projects. If we do not expend the bond proceeds on the projects for which they were approved, we would be legally required to call the outstanding bonds and return the proceeds, but would not recoup all of the issuance costs. This would be extremely shortsighted.

Unfortunately, deferring maintenance on existing buildings to cut spending in the short term rarely helps the long-term bottom line. These projects continue to grow and often increase in magnitude and cost if not addressed in a timely way. Projects are scheduled during the summer months when the institution is not in session. Skipping a year or two of scheduled maintenance due to funding shortfalls makes it very difficult to catch up during improved financial times. Facilities Planning and Construction will reevaluate all capital maintenance projects scheduled for the next three fiscal years to prioritize projects that involve life-safety issues, building envelope projects, and major mechanical systems. These projects need to be addressed to avoid safety hazards, major water damage, or system failures that would close buildings and disrupt academic or residential programs at Oberlin.

Short-term allocations can be reduced for equipment, furniture, and furnishings, thus reducing the financial burden on the endowment by \$4.3 million over the next three years. Fortunately, there are adequate balances to acquire critical equipment purchases without disrupting our multitude of programs.

9: Oberlin has a proud tradition of access and inclusion. Will our commitment to financial aid be affected by the economic slowdown?

Providing worthy students with access to our academic, artistic, and musical excellence is a fundamental Oberlin value. Our commitment to socioeconomic diversity remains a top priority despite the economic downturn, and we will do everything possible to maintain our strong financial aid programs for the duration of the current financial climate.

10: Will this downturn have an impact on the College's commitment to sustainability?

No. Oberlin is a nationally recognized leader in environmental responsibility and sustainability, and will remain at the forefront in these areas. The College will continue its green initiatives and adhere to its goal of becoming a carbon-neutral institution. Carbon neutrality and fiscal responsibility are not mutually exclusive. By utilizing our innovative campus resource monitoring system, by lowering our thermostats, by making less use of College vehicles, and by turning off unnecessary lights, machines, and appliances, we are helping to reduce Oberlin's impact on the environment.

11: Will the College increase the number of enrolled students to balance the budget?

No. The long-term strategic plan actually calls for reducing the undergraduate head count to 2,720. The current economic situation has caused Oberlin to slow the process of this reduction by holding the student body static at 2,831 for the short term; however, increasing the student body beyond this in order to generate additional revenue would have a negative impact on housing, access to classes, and our faculty-student ratio, among other things.

12: Are the benefits Oberlin provides its employees going to change?

After salaries and wages, the cost of our benefit programs is the second largest expenditure at

Oberlin. The College annually reviews and amends all benefit plans to assess the management of future costs, including comparison of our benefits to peer institutions. The Benefits Committee recently completed a very thorough evaluation of our health plan, such that immediate material changes are not likely. However, other programs will be reviewed for opportunities to better control the costs of these programs, including tuition remission and retiree health benefits.

13: How will travel expenditures be reduced?

Some reduction will occur naturally, as travel costs usually decline during recessionary periods. But we will also require that individuals carefully consider on a case-by-case basis whether travel is essential, and ask that they explore alternatives whenever possible.

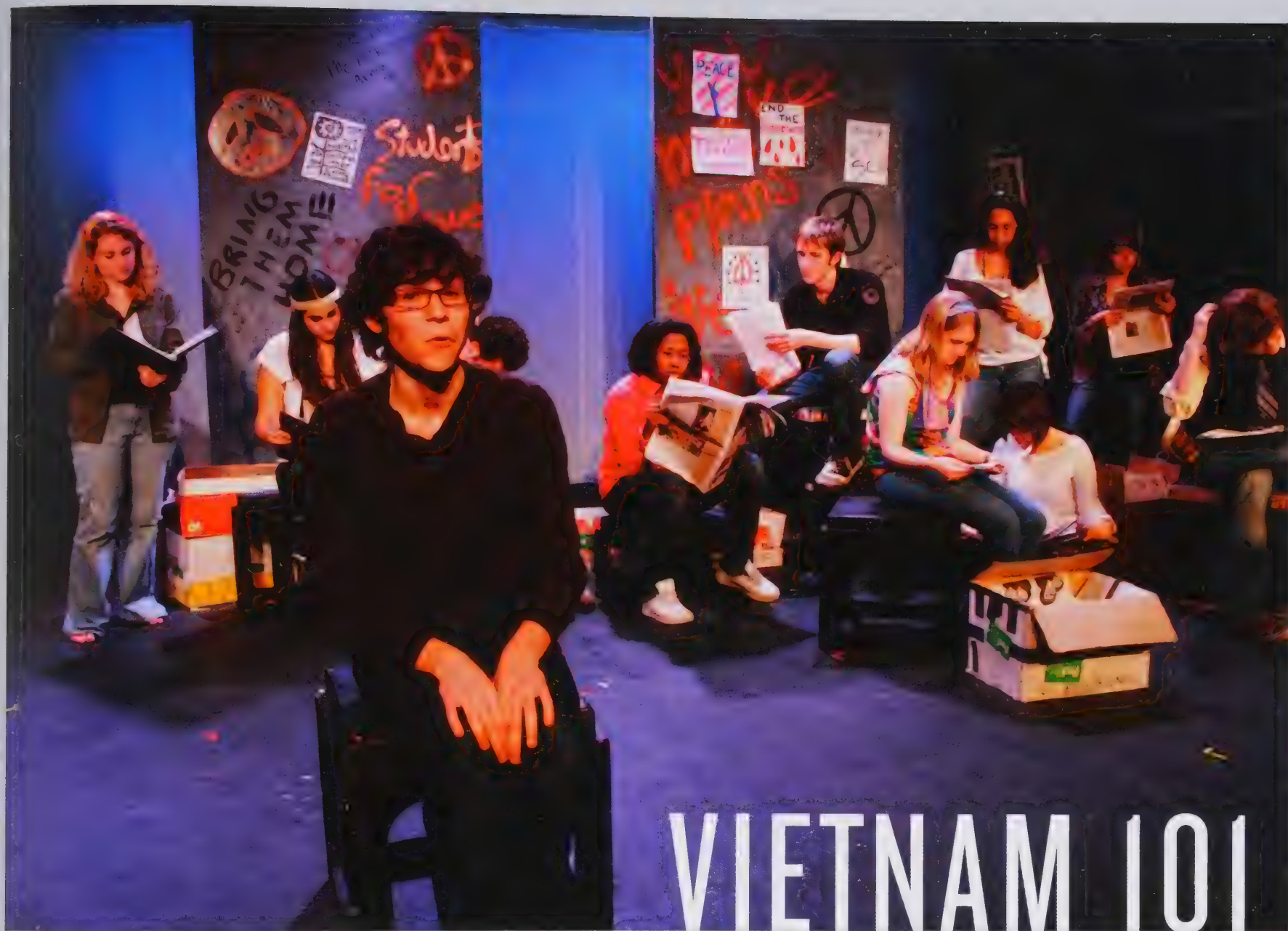
14: Will the College curtail its cost cutting when the economy rebounds?

No. Finding ways to keep the cost of a college education affordable is a top priority at Oberlin. As the economy rebounds, inflationary pressures tend to cause expenditure growth on our operating budget. Controlling expenditure growth is a continuous process that Oberlin embraced long before the current financial downturn. However, if the economy improves adequately, faculty and staff salaries that are currently being held flat will be reevaluated.

15: What can the Oberlin community do to help the College successfully navigate the current economic climate?

President Krislov and the senior staff have already engaged many members of the Oberlin community as the College looks to identify additional ways to reduce expenditures. We hope to develop additional channels through which students, faculty, and staff can suggest cost-saving measures.

Philanthropic support from alumni and friends is critical to the health of the College, especially during difficult economic times. If you haven't already done so, please consider a gift to Oberlin.



Alex Birnie '10

VIETNAM 101

Orloff play brings 1960s era back to life for today's Oberlin students

First performed in November 1989 at Oberlin (under the title *Days of Possibilities*), Rich Orloff's full-length play about life on campus during the Vietnam War era recently enjoyed another successful run at Oberlin's Little Theater.

Renamed *Vietnam 101: The War On Campus*, the show was presented to enthusiastic audiences by the College's *Theater 101* class last December. The play is based on the recollections of more than 100 former Oberlin students who provided Orloff with letters and phone interviews in the late 1980s.

Full of emotional scenes in which students wrestle with the ethical dilemmas presented by the war, *Vietnam 101* traces its impact on the college campus—from President Lyndon Johnson's decision to dramatically escalate America's involvement in 1965 through the tragic shootings at Kent State University on May 4, 1970, and beyond.

Facilitated by Oberlin Associate Professor Matthew Wright, the production featured four student directors—fourth-year student Alexander Birnie, and seniors Alex Huntsberger, Anna Strasser, and Elizabeth Woodbury—and a cast of Oberlin undergrads.

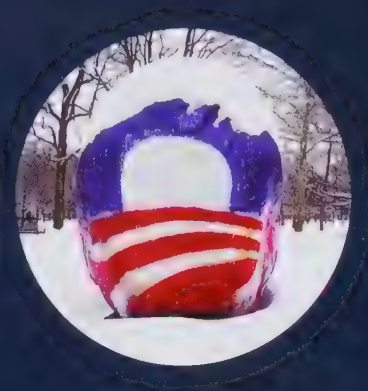
For many of the audience members—including the playwright himself—watching the high-energy ensemble of Oberlin students wrestle with moral problems was a deeply moving experience.

"Those were extraordinary years, and to see them being reenacted onstage by contemporary students was very moving," says George E. Langelier, who served as Oberlin's dean of students from 1966 through 1989. "The students of that era faced some very difficult choices, and so did those of us who were serving on the faculty.

"Down deep, I was sympathetic with those who thought the war was inappropriate. And I was convinced that it was a really dubious enterprise. But I also thought I had a responsibility to protect the academy—to keep the College open and to do my best to keep people talking to each other.

"It was a very painful time ... but it was also a time of great creativity and intellectual growth for so many of our students. I think we all owe Rich Orloff a debt of gratitude for bringing so much of that amazing era back to us in his wonderful play." —TN

TRANSITION OR



TRANSFORMATION:

WILL THE

OBAMA

ERA MEAN REAL

CHANGE

?

As the first African American to hold the position of president of the United States, Barack Obama is assured a prominent place in history. But the change on which Obama campaigned went well beyond his own demographics. Now, in the early stages of his presidency, questions remain about what this change will look like. Are we merely in the midst of a simple transition—one president to the next, one party to the other—or at the dawn of new era, a time of genuine transformation?

That is the question the *Oberlin Alumni Magazine* posed to a number of Oberlin faculty members. Their answers, which drew deeply from their readings of history, poetry, philosophy, and religion—and from watching a little television, ranged from the personal to the satirical.



We'll grapple with issues in a new way ... and with a new "we."

Carol Lasser
Professor of History
Chair, Department of History

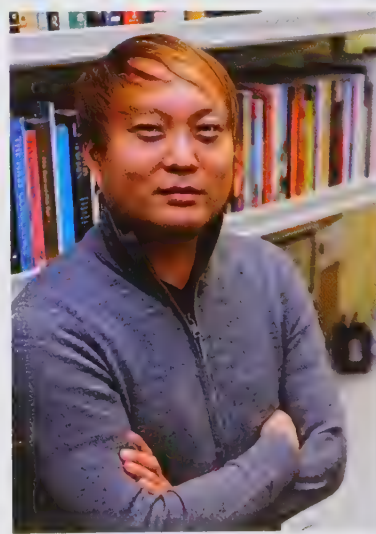
Does Obama mean change? Absolutely! In this community of progressive American historians where I work, Barack Obama's election is an electrifying, unanticipated, and much celebrated breakthrough. Ten years

ago, five years ago, maybe even 18 months ago, it seemed impossible. So many of us, for so many years, have confronted in our scholarship the distortions wrought by a long shadow of racism and the ugly legacy of slavery. The election of a black man to the highest office in the nation reaffirms for us the efficacy of—and necessity for—struggle, the belief that forward-looking change is possible. Certainly, we still have far to go to achieve social justice; the election of Barack Obama did not eliminate racism or racial poverty, nor did it immediately create alternatives to a failing economy that disproportionately impacts working people of all races. It did not instantaneously educate millions of children trapped in failing schools, or create new opportunities for those who crossed borders to make better lives for themselves and their families in the United States. It did not straight away end American engagement in wars of aggression, and it did not overturn a legal system based on fundamentalist-inflected heteronormativity. But after this election, we will grapple with the most American of dilemmas—race—in a new way. And it will be a new "we"

Moreover, neither party can ever again fail to take women candidates seriously—both because Hillary Clinton's challenge demonstrated that women of talent and achievement are formidable fac-

tors, and because the backlash against Sarah Palin underscored that women and men are concerned about gender justice, beginning with quality of mind, not particularities of plumbing.

But more than this, Barack Obama's election brought to the ballot box millions of first-time voters—young people, people who had previously felt disenfranchised, people who had given up on the system. Barack Obama has renewed my belief in democracy; I want to think that his election reinvigorated democracy, not just as discourse or performance, but as a framework for participatory civic life. Is that enough? Not yet. In the words of black feminist activist Ella Baker—words that Sweet Honey in the Rock sang with us in Finney Chapel just after this historic election—"We who believe in freedom cannot rest."



One step closer

Eric S. Estes
Associate Dean and Director
of the Multicultural
Resource Center
Adjunct Assistant Professor
of Comparative American
Studies and History

As I watched the election night results with a raucous group of Oberlin colleagues, I had a really random thought. After Pennsylvania and Ohio had been

called for Obama, finally making it clear to everyone that he was going to win, I thought, 'Who are they going to get to play the president in movies now?'

There has been an interesting history of black actors playing the president, usually in comedies such as Chris Rock's *Head of State* or in futuristic science fiction films such as *Deep Impact*

with Morgan Freeman or *The Fifth Element* with Tommy Lister. In recent years, the television series *24* has contributed more interesting representations, with two black actors playing the president. *The West Wing* elected the first Latino president in its final season. In each case, there was a sense of fantasy or future or both, either implicitly or explicitly, through such casting. We know it is the future because a year ago, very few people could have imagined the election of the first black president.

So, on one hand, the election of Barack Obama was, in a very real way, a transformative moment in terms of possibilities in this country. It brings us closer to Martin Luther King's dream of social justice, and we should not underestimate how meaningful these moments are in our history. We should appreciate and celebrate them to the fullest. On the other hand, the election was not the realization of racial reconciliation in our country, but rather one step, albeit an important one, toward the goal of racial justice. As commentator Tavis Smiley recently pointed out on *Meet the Press*, King himself cautioned against placing too much significance on "black faces in high places" after the election of the first black mayor of a major U.S. city, Carl B. Stokes, more than 40 years ago in Cleveland. Representation is only part of the struggle for meaningful social change, and race remains important, despite chants by Obama supporters that "race doesn't matter" at celebrations of his wins in the Iowa caucus and the South Carolina primary.

Discourse around Obama's middle name, his family's immigrant history, his masculinity—remember how his bowling and playing basketball, his patriotism, and his community organizing experience were all racialized—represent powerful evidence that race does still matter and much work needs to be done. If an Obama administration is going to produce "change we can believe in," then we should look to his example of community organizing—not as a questionable experience, as some on the political right have argued, but rather as a powerful and proven model for moving forward. To quote another pop culture president, Josiah Bartlett, we all need to ask, "What's next?" and continue the hard work in our communities that helped make Hollywood fiction a possibility.

Beyond Neoliberalism

Marc Blecher

Professor of Politics and
East Asian Studies

The election of Barack Obama turned out to be an existential experience for me. I've been depressed about American (and world) politics my entire adult life. This has been especially painful in light of the excitement of the 1960s, the formative period that shaped my politics and, indeed,

my choice of a career studying Chinese politics. For some time I had been profoundly despondent and regretful about the kind of world that we of the '60s generation had, in the end, willed to future generations—especially to my kids and grandson.

It's only with the fullness of time and a good dose of an approach to political economy known as *régimes of accumulation theory* that I now realize that the '60s weren't the bright beginning of anything, as we mystified young idealists thought. Rather, from a materialist perspective, they marked the end of something—the last gasp of "Fordism." That was named after Henry Ford, who invented the \$5/day wage when he realized he could make more money by paying his workers better so they would be more productive and have money to buy Fords. Fordism lasted from the Great Depression until the early 1970s. It involved an activist government role in regulating the economy and redistributing income, the acceptance by capital of organized labor, and a decent standard of living for the white, male working class. We children of '50s and '60s liberalism tried, in good dialectical style, to "complete" or "perfect" it into something truer to its own professed values by extending its gains to women and African Americans. Fordism was also premised on U.S. supremacy in the world, and we demanded that the Pax Americana live up to its name. Though we couldn't see it at the time, by the end of the 1960s, Fordism was collapsing due to international competition and internal rot, as labor and management both grew flabby from enjoying their relative accommodation. That is why the '60s were doomed to fail; Fordism couldn't even survive, much less be perfected.

It was replaced by neoliberalism, a new régime of accumulation characterized by radical deregulation, the loss of American dominance in the world, globalization, financialization, and economic "flexibility." We all now know where that got us economically. Politically, for me, it was a disaster too, serving up Reagan, the Bushes, and the radical right, punctuated only by occasional mild relief (Carter, Clinton) and some progress on middle-class social conflicts (e.g., gender, sexuality, and environmental awareness) that neoliberalism would allow so long as they didn't adversely affect the capitalist economy. Yet despite a highly ideological misconception to the contrary, neoliberalism actually produced slower growth than Fordism, while also racking up stupendous increases in inequality. And don't even mention the environment. This was the world in which a progressive like me spent a whole adult life, and which I seemed doomed to bequeath to my sons and grandson—a far cry from the imagined utopias of the 1960s.

But 2008 proved different. For much of the year, I was, like so many on the left, unconvinced by Obama's vague call for "change." Soon, though, the underlying logic began to become apparent to me—and perhaps to him too. Neoliberalism itself was dying after its 35-year run, and the moment for a new régime of accumulation had arrived. Each time a régime of accumulation collapses and a new one must perforce replace it, an important president can appear. When the despotic capitalism of the 19th- and early 20th-century gave out, we got FDR. When Fordism, which he ushered in, died, we got Reagan. With the collapse of neoliberalism, it was Obama's turn.

So for the first time since 1972, I threw myself into mainstream politics again, volunteering way more hours and donating way more money than I could sensibly afford. The Palin nomination didn't hurt—she didn't just mobilize her own base. Marx said it best in the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, which I still teach to



Gary Cohen '11

a large crowd (for which I am so grateful to Oberlin): “Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.” Nixon and Reagan were the tragedies, and Bush and, finally, Palin were the farce, the latter not just because of Tina Fey.

Things are bad right now, and they had to be. And of course it's the poor who suffer the most. Marxian theory teaches me that big structures die hard. But the depth of the crash indicates the profundity with which neoliberalism has destroyed itself. Rahm Emanuel recently said that we should never waste a good crisis. In China, the word for crisis is comprised of two characters: *wei* (danger) and *ji* (opportunity). If I take the longer view, I'm actually happy the crisis, which had to come sooner or later, is finally here. For it, and Obama with it, offer the opportunity to build something much better.



Real change? Only if Obama means what he says.

Jafar Mahallati

Visiting Professor of Religion

One of the things to consider in determining whether Obama's presidency is “transformational” or merely “transitional” is knowing the world's expectations of his administration.

My field is Islamic and Middle Eastern studies. To look at that question from this specific angle,

I have to talk about this administration's image in the Muslim world, because that image may influence policymaking. Looking at Obama's “literature,” or what he conveys to the Muslim ear in his speeches, I say his presidency is transformational. But not only because of his literature, which is eloquent, but by who he is. The symbolism of his being in office is transformational because it destroys worldwide stereotypes about America.

I recently returned from Iran, where I met with many clergymen, laymen, and politicians, and I can already see the difference. Their image of America has changed, and for the better.

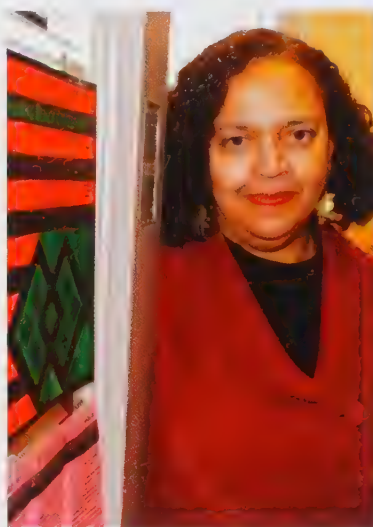
Last year when I talked with them about the possibility of Obama becoming president they said, “No—that would never happen in America as we know!” In the U.S., some say, Obama was successful in part because “we didn't see his color.” But the rest of the world did. They know the history of racism in the United States, and this election has changed their view of Americans. This leaves huge momentum in the hands of Obama's administration to tear down international and intercultural walls of separation and mistrust created by many wars of the last decade.

It is too early to see what percent is transition and what percent is transformation, but we see that Obama has chosen many known figures, many known faces, such as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Special Representative for Afghanistan and

Pakistan Richard Holbrooke, and Special Advisor for Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia Dennis Ross for his State Department. While the Obama administration's major focus so far has been in economic policies, his foreign policy apparatus shows only transition, not transformation. However, if this apparatus were to continue, in words and action, along the lines of Obama's friendship and justice-oriented literature regarding foreign affairs, we can expect transformation.

Whether the Arab-Israeli conflict will be the center of U.S. attention in the Middle East, as it has been for previous administrations, or whether the Obama administration will have a more comprehensive view of the region and engage in many other important matters, it is too early to tell. Most people in the Muslim world are expecting transformation. In the next six months, they will decide whether they are right or wrong.

Obama said in his inauguration speech vis a vis the Muslim world that he would pursue a policy of justice and respect. To strong-arm governments he said, “We will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.” Already these lines have produced positive responses. But they must also come from the mouths of other policymakers in the state department. Obama's diplomats, if they want to be effective, must talk with a language sensitive to other cultures and understand their mores and metaphors. It is time for the state department to hire some poets.



An invitation to the harder work

Caroline Jackson Smith

Associate Professor of Theater and African American Studies Chair, Department of African American Studies

On November 4, 2008, I found myself glued to my television set, wondering if this really was the moment when our country would make one of those rare and historic leaps. As I watched the rising tide of support for Barack

Obama, I realized that every sacrifice made by generations of people since the African slave trade had really mattered; that historic shifts are the accumulation of actions big and small over a vast landscape of time and place, a cavalcade of ordinary heroes and heroes who fixed their eyes on a prize beyond human vision, and who made painful choices for a liberation they may never have physically experienced.

As an African American who traces at least seven generations in this country and who came of age in a generation charged with marching through long-closed doors, I felt affirmed, uplifted. As an African Americanist who has spent 40 years pressing America to see and own its real history, I felt astonished that the average news reporter now discussed matter-of-factly that which we teach every day in our classes at Oberlin, but which average Americans often know nothing about. When Ohio turned blue, I felt certain that Obama and the Democrats would win. When

the election was declared, I heard the echoes of revelry from downtown Oberlin as our students, who had worked so hard, celebrated with the rest of the world, feeling that sense of power, connectedness, and real citizenship that was so much a part of my youth in the movement.

But having studied America's ability to slip behind the veil of denial for most of my life, I hear the term "post-racial America" and know this is just a moment for continuing the real work of taking apart centuries of distorted beliefs about African cultures and people, those that provided the foundation for unspeakable acts of oppression and a template for other forms of prejudice and inequality. Our national statistics on criminalization, poverty, education, and housing disparities tell us that the deep historic racial divides have not been healed, and President Obama's election is an opportunity not to declare ourselves beyond race, but to be invited into the harder work of becoming the beloved community Martin Luther King envisioned. As Tim Wise notes in his book *Between Barack and a Hard Place: Racism and White Denial in the Age of Obama*, now is the time to redouble our efforts to dismantle racism and other forms of inequality, remembering King's admonition that "change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle."

**Obama may mean change,
but not the change he means.**

Timothy Hall

Associate Professor of Philosophy

During his campaign, the term "liberal" was wielded disparagingly against candidate Obama. It is not impossible that by the end of his first term President Obama will be a term of disparagement among liberals.

Contemporary liberalism is a hybrid political ideology. On the

one hand, liberalism endorses some set of robust political rights. Freedom of expression, freedom of association, the right to privacy, freedom of choice in lifestyles, and a range of protections for the accused in criminal procedures are prominent examples.

On the other hand, contemporary liberalism is not so protective of what we might call economic liberties. When it comes to redistributive taxation, or affirmative action, or environmental regulation, liberals claim that such policies do not implicate serious rights. Taxation to fund the welfare state does not infringe any right of taxpayers to the income they otherwise would have retained. Regulation on business activity, for purposes of affirmative action or environmental regulation, does not infringe on any rights of business owners to conduct business in a way they would otherwise prefer.

Liberalism falls short in underestimating the importance of economic liberties to the overall social good. A less regulated and more lightly taxed market economy produces a range of social goods: innovative experiments whose risk is borne by individuals

but whose benefits are enjoyed widely, increases in efficiency brought about by the closer knowledge of private investors of their investments, innovation brought about by the sheer diversity of private investors, the ability of minority preferences to be satisfied without popular approval, and so on. Furthermore, the practical liberty of citizens to pursue a diversity of lifestyles, interests, and careers is enhanced where state interference with commercial activity is reduced.

So we arrive at the presidency of Barack Obama. President Obama will oversee more than a trillion dollars in new deficit spending, dollar-destroying federal debt, growth-slowing labor regulations, fantastic amounts of wasted aid to large industries, the federal government's collecting unto itself the detailed medical records of all American residents, the continued surveillance of all our Internet activity, and continued dismissal of criminal due process, to name only some of the more prominent policies.

Even liberals may thus find themselves voicing a long-standing complaint about a liberal state. Direct government control over large parts of what would otherwise be the private economy brings systematic problems, problems that are not simply the result of a particular president, or particular party controlling the Congress. Even when it is not abusive—and a powerful government inevitably will be—enormous government makes us poorer and less free.

American liberals, in short, might find that their inevitable disenchantment with their charismatic leader is more than a personal disappointment. They might find their hopes for government itself are permanently dashed. It would be no small irony if this were the lasting change wrought by the Obama administration.

Our new best Friend?

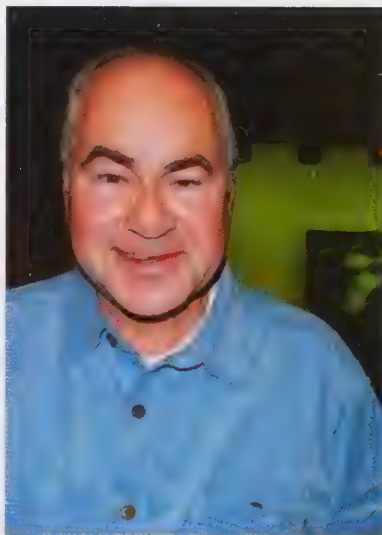
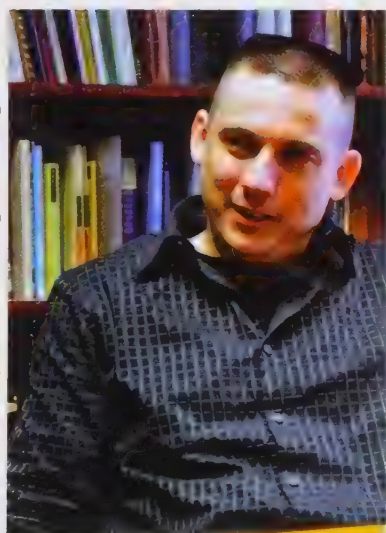
Roger Copeland

Professor of Theater and Dance

By now, you would have to be living in fact-free limbo to believe Barack Obama is a "secret Muslim," as some opponents suggested during the campaign. I think it is possible, however, that he's a "secret Quaker"—so secret he himself has yet to recognize his true religious calling.

I don't base this claim solely on the fact that the Obamas chose the Sidwell Friends School, a prestigious Quaker institution in Washington, D.C., for their two young daughters. Rather I see many of the values of the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, exemplified in the way their father campaigned for the presidency, and is governing. Is there anyone else in public life today who embodies the Quaker ideal of "stillness" and inner peace more than the man known as "No Shock Barack. No Drama Obama"? Complementing that unflappable cool is the warmer, more ingratiating side of Obama's public persona: the easy way he lights up a room, the incandescence derived from the sheer candle power of his smile. A manifestation perhaps of what Quakers refer to as the "inner light" that they seek in all people.

Photos: left, Ma'ayan Plaut '10; right, Jeff Hagan '86



The official credo of the Sidwell Friends School, for example, is "Eluceat omnibus lux" or "Let the light shine out from all."

Quaker teachings have their own distinctive vocabulary, phrases such as "active listening," "outwardly-directed witness," "intentional community," as well as more familiar-sounding concepts such as "interfaith worship." Obama may not always talk the Quaker talk, but he does seem to embrace "active listening." In directing his faith outwardly toward the community, he seems to walk the Quaker walk.

But what clinches for me the "Obama as secret Quaker" argument is the affinity between his belief in bipartisanship—perhaps even post-partisanship—and the distinctive method of group decision-making practiced by Quakers: consensus. When it works, consensus is truly transformative. The concept of winners and losers—and the accompanying fear that the losing minority may be bullied or even tyrannized by the majority—gives way to a process that seeks to resolve, or at least mitigate, minority concerns. Above all, for practitioners of consensus, the *process itself* is as important or even more important than the product it produces. But as any resident of an Oberlin co-op or any faculty member of a Quaker school can tell you, when consensus doesn't work, the process can be downright torturous.

For Obama, bipartisanship does not appear to be merely a means to an end (e.g. a strategy for obtaining the best possible stimulus package). It's an end in itself—a whole new, tone-changing approach to bi-party governance—one that deserves to be defended above and beyond the specific results it yields. Why else would Obama have originally envisioned a stimulus package that might garner 80 votes in the Senate as opposed to the more realistic and still veto-proof number of 60? That also helps explain why Obama preemptively offered the Republicans \$300 billion worth of tax cuts before serious negotiations had begun.

Obama knows the concept of "consensus"—indeed, the desirability of ever arriving legislatively at something akin to consensus—was the single biggest casualty of the era of hyper-partisanship in American politics. That Red State/Blue State era was pioneered by Lee Atwater, perfected by Karl Rove and his wedge issues like same-sex marriage bans, and is most evident today in the person of Rush Limbaugh, who appears to be functioning as the de-facto head of the Republican Party.

Therein of course lies the problem with attempting to govern the U.S. as a consensus-seeking Quaker. Obama has reached so often and vigorously across the aisle that he's in danger of dislocating his right shoulder. How many times can you extend a hand in search of consensus only to be ignored or rebuffed? The answer for Quakers is: as often as necessary.

With not a single Republican in the House and only three Republicans in the Senate willing to vote for the stimulus bill, bipartisan consensus amounts to an unrequited gesture on Obama's part. There is, of course, a method to the madness of this Republican intransigence. The Republicans want to do to Barack Obama what Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole did to Bill Clinton in 1994. If they can weaken Obama's initiatives just enough to prevent them from reviving the economy, then the GOP has a reasonable chance of changing the balance of power as early as two years from now. Once again, it's the economy, stupid, that will determine whether or not Obama can achieve something as "transformational" as the New Deal.

But it may prove transformative in itself if Obama continues to govern like a Quaker. If nothing else, he's bound to be an improvement over the two American presidents who actually *were* raised as members of the Religious Society of Friends. Believe it or not, our only two bona-fide Quaker presidents were Herbert Hoover and Richard Nixon. With Friends like those ... ●

Oberlin and the Inauguration

Oberlin observed the Barack Obama inauguration with one event under two roofs, organized by representatives of the College and broader Oberlin community. About 700 people gathered in the College's Root Room and another 200 went to the Mt. Zion Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Oberlin to watch the historic event on large screens (top photos).

Oberlin was also represented at the inaugural events in Washington. Conservatory professors Michael Lynn and Marilyn McDonald joined with fellow members of the Smithsonian Chamber Players on period instruments at the Inaugural Luncheon, to perform selections from Thomas Jefferson's extensive music library (behind them in photo is Kenneth Slowik, artistic director of the Oberlin Baroque Performance Institute who is also artistic director of the Smithsonian Chamber Players). Two hundred guests, including the president and vice president and their families, the Supreme Court, members of the cabinet and the congressional leadership, attended the luncheon, a century-old tradition held at the Capitol's Statuary Hall.



Photos: left, bottom Dan Shore; middle and top John Seyfried

Oberlin

New Happenings in the Oberlin Community • Spring 2009

Alumni Notes

Year by Year

The members of the Class of 1959 who come to Oberlin for their 50th reunion this year may remember the bus in this picture, taken by Rosalee Figge Beasley '59 in 1958.

The 36-passenger bus, brightly clad in college colors made all the more lively in the photograph by the contrast against the drab sandstone of Talcott Hall, was purchased in 1953 and described at that time as “natty” by the *Oberlin News-Tribune*. It was used by Oberlin's athletic teams and by the Social Board to take students to special events in Cleveland and

elsewhere. It replaced a broken-down 17-passenger bus affectionately (we think) known as the Green Spleen.

Members of the Class of 1959 will be particularly interested in an exhibit of materials

related to Oberlin campus life in the late 1950s, organized for commencement/reunion weekend, May 22-25, 2009, by the Oberlin College Archives, in the Goodrich Room on the fourth floor of Mudd Library.



1939

Helen Boatwright, a teacher and performer, was featured in the *Post-Standard* (Syracuse, N.Y.). Helen performed during a fundraising event on her 92nd birthday, singing German lieder and American songs.

1946

Jeanne Davis Porter lives in Wolfeboro, N.H., and, despite breaking her hip two years ago, still performs and spends much of her time learning new music. “Winters in New Hampshire are glorious,” she reports. “Come for a visit!”

1950

Belden Paulson recently published *Odyssey of a Practical Vision*, a 55-chapter chronicle of his life and times, about which Oberlin College's recently retired archivist Roland Baumann says: “For those readers seeking to know more

about what it means to lead the life of an Obie, by which I mean one who embraced the values of disinterested obligation and service to mankind, this memoir will hold special relevance.”

1956

Dale Conly was inducted into the State of Ohio Soccer Hall of Fame during a December ceremony. He recently retired from coaching soccer at Western Reserve Academy in Hudson, Ohio, after 28 years.

1960



Joy McIntyre and several of her classmates enjoyed a mini-reunion in Vermont last August. Pictured from left to right are **Margaret**

Locklin Groninger, **Arvi Sinka**, **Joy**, and **Ron Kershner**. The photo was taken at Hildene, the home of Robert Todd Lincoln in Manchester, Vt.

1962

⊕ **Jeremy Robinson** and his wife, Diana, moved to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley to open a bed and breakfast, the Hummingbird Inn, in 1992. Jeremy had a 25-year career in professional book publishing in New York City, ending up as editor-in-chief of architecture and engineering at McGraw-Hill and publisher at John Wiley & Sons. “Ten years later, we sold the inn in order to concentrate on the web site hosting and development business I had started while an innkeeper (www.ew3d.com),” he writes. “We have moved to a 45-acre property in Rockbridge Baths, Va., on which we have a guest cottage popular with children (five), grandchildren (four to date), and friends.” W: www.ashwoodhill.com.

1964

Richard M. Candee has been busy since retiring as professor emeritus from Boston University's American & New England Studies Program. Last year he helped the Portsmouth New Hampshire



Candee

Historical Society lease a former city library as a new visitor center and exhibit space for his exhibit on local artist Russell Cheney (1881-1945), "for which I also mounted a new web site (www.russellcheney.com)

and an August symposium that visited the artist's home and studio," he writes. The Greater Portsmouth Chamber of Commerce honored Richard last summer as Citizen of the Year. •

Louise Lichtenberg-Weissglas retired in 2004 after more than three years at the Weizmann Institute, Rehovot, Israel, and more than three decades in the clinical labs of the General Health Services' central Tel-Aviv labs (most of the time as chief of the endocrine laboratory). After a year performing freelance



Lichtenberg-Weissglas

work, giving lectures, and offering advisory help to a large diagnostic company, she changed directions. "I do volunteer tutoring in English to children from lower socio-economic families via an organization called PUSH (<http://pushedu.org/>); exercise regularly; study ballroom dancing; go to adult education courses on music, kabbalah, Italy, or whatever looks interesting; play (a lot) with my four grandchildren; and continue to serve on the board of the Israel Classical Ballet." Last November, Louise went to Puerto Rico to participate in a ballroom dance competition, where she took first place among the "newcomer ladies."

1966

Muriel Minot is still riding high from her appearance as the police captain's secretary in



Minot

Clint Eastwood's movie, *The Changeling*. Her husband, Terry Beasor, recently appeared in *The Office*. The couple resides in Los Angeles and celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary in December. Her mystery

inside the alumni association

Race: Let's Talk About It

That the inauguration of President Obama has spawned thousands of conversations about race in the U.S. and the world does not surprise me. My "conversations" have encompassed memories of overt racism, the most poignant of which was written by San Francisco columnist Chip Johnson, who apparently grew up in Oberlin in the 1970s.

Johnson and two of his buddies had biked six miles from Oberlin to South Amherst, Ohio, to buy ice cream. However, the boys—varying degrees of skin tone—were stopped by a policeman who asked where they were from and why they weren't in school. When Johnson and his friends told the officer they did not have school that day, the officer explained that since the kids in South Amherst were in school, they were not allowed to be in town. "It wasn't until I saw Obama on that stage that I understood how profound that moment was," Johnson recalled. "Americans elected a black man, a man like me, with the blood of many nations running through his veins. His election has reinvigorated me, and for the first time in many years, I feel hope and pride for the country where I was born."

On Sunday of inauguration week, my minister, a white woman, recalled several racial incidents from her early years in Oklahoma. The content of her stories was too familiar—even though I grew up in western Pennsylvania. She concluded her talk by observing that our congregation of mostly white "religious liberals" may not have evolved much beyond Oklahoma of the 1950s. I have to agree with her.

One conversation held much hope for the future. My physician, a native of India, had just returned from the inauguration when I went to see him for a routine procedure. He had traveled to Washington with his family to witness a defining, historic event, and was still talking about it when I went under.

Had we not elected Barack Obama, none of these three "conversations" would have occurred. Now, however, it is up to us—all of us—to carry on vital conversations about race in America and the world.

As an Oberlin alumnus, I want to believe I am ready to do so, but am I? Are you? If not, it seems that may fit the Oberlin tradition too, for in 1835, few were ready to welcome blacks to study at Oberlin, according to the late Professor Geoffrey Blodgett's revealing essay, "Myth and Reality in Oberlin History." No one would come to Oberlin, Blodgett wrote, "not Finney, or Mahan, or Morgan, or the Lane rebels, and there would be no money from the Tappans—unless Oberlin agreed to a policy of open admissions irrespective of color. ... [Founder John Shipherd] was dismayed to discover that the people of Oberlin were profoundly unenthusiastic about the whole idea—particularly about the admission of blacks." Only after Trustee Chairman John Keep broke a tie vote on the issue did Oberlin finally accept it.

Over the century and three-quarters since that vote, Oberlin's growth toward equality has occurred not because we were all "on board," but because we have often enough found the courage to learn from one another. That is where we are now that an African American is in the White House. Today we are not called to the "barricades" or to voter registration drives as we were in the 1960s. Today we are called to reveal ourselves to people who are mostly like us, but who are of different histories, traditions, and skin tones.

Bill Hilton '65
President, Alumni Association



⊕ See This Sign? ⊕

If so, you are reading an excerpt of a class note that was posted to OBIEweb. To read the author's full class note, log on to OBIEweb at

www.oberlin.edu/alumni.

Follow the links from the "Keep in Touch" bar in the upper left corner.



To join OBIEweb, go to the MyOBIEweb box and click on "register to access the community" (it's free). You'll need your Oberlin ID number, which appears above your name on the address label of this magazine. Please direct questions to alumni@oberlin.edu or (440) 775-8692.

dinner theatre company (www.MysteriesEnBrochette.com) is in its 11th year. "If you come to L.A., please try to catch a show," she writes. She keeps in touch with Gail Nelson '65, her friend and bridesmaid; **Cathy Hiller Sullivan**, her roommate from college; and James Paul '63. She also reconnected with Kirsten Falke-Boyd '63. E: mminot@mysteriesenbrochette.com.

1967

Tom Pellaton returned to the U.S. after 11 years as rector of the American Episcopal Church in Munich, Germany, to become the eighth rector of the Church of the Ascension in Rockville Centre, Long Island, N.Y. He was instituted as rector by the Rev. Orris J. Walker, bishop of Long Island, on September 27, 2008, in a colorful ceremony attended by parishioners, family, and friends who gathered from across the U.S. and Europe. (See slide show at www.ascensionrvc.org). On the evening before the ceremony, **Francois Clemmons** and John Russell '64 performed a concert of organ music and spirituals. A: 98 Plymouth Rd., Rockville Centre, N.Y., 11570. P: 516-608-0003. E: revtjpp@yahoo.com.

Send alumni news and photos to:
145 W. Lorain St., Oberlin, OH 44074

1968

⊕ **Susan Strasser MacKinnon** writes, "Since I retired from medical practice in 2002, I have done a lot of volunteer work, as well as some part-time medical work. A major accomplishment was the completion and printing in November 2008 of my book *Flowers of the Table Rocks*, which involved many hours of hiking, study, photography, microscopic dissections, and learning PageMaker and PhotoShop well enough to create the book." W: www.flowersofthetablerocks.com.



1969

Last November, **David D. Burgess** was named one of Denver's "150 Ordinary Citizens who are Making Extraordinary Contributions to the Mile High City," by John Hickenlooper, the city's mayor. David is executive director at CHARG Resource Center in Denver, a facility that works to improve the quality of life and functioning capacity of people with severe and persistent mental illness. • ⊕ **Christopher Michel** and **Sara Ruddy** attended their 40th cluster reunion last May "and had a terrific time," Christopher writes. "After our first alumni trip to Oberlin 39 years after graduating, I compiled a photo essay of that weekend. I added to it some of my never-before published photos from the 1968 Peters Hall 'checkerboard' sit-in." Visit http://picasaweb.google.com/chrisandsarasalbum/Reunion_2008# and see if you can recognize yourself.

1970

Nancy Baxter and her husband are happily living in Tarzana, Calif. Nancy continues to work with the International Myeloma Foundation as the hotline coordinator. Her son, David, is married and practices law, and her daughter, Rachael, is a psychiatric social worker. "I would love to hear from other Obies." E: nancys.baxter@sbeglobal.net. • ⊕ **Philip Koch**'s contemporary landscape paintings were shown at the George Billis Gallery in New York



City in January. • **Carolyn Kubitschek** was named a "Super Lawyer" in family law practice for the second time by *Super Lawyers* magazine in New York. The honor is reserved for only five percent of practicing attorneys. The law firm of Lansner & Kubitschek handles cases in family and matrimonial law, civil rights, and social security law. Carolyn also serves as an adjunct professor at Cardozo Law School.

1972

Bea Camp and husband David Summers '71 celebrated their first Thanksgiving in Shanghai with all six current Shansi fellows and several alumni.



The gang included Aaliyah Bilal '04, Alex Chew '06, Theo Croker, Sophia Grimes, Ben Reitz, and Beth Rogers, all '07, Nick Hatt, Anne Lowe, and Alex Paik, all '08.

1973

A new comedy by playwright **Rich Orloff**, *Funny as a Crutch*, nine short comedies about disability, was produced by the Foolish Theatre Company, and performed at the Abingdon Theatre Arts Complex in New York last November. "Rick Orloff's witty, unpredictable script fends off pity and preachiness with a daffy sense of humor," wrote the *New York Times*. Rich is featured in this issue of OAM on page 20.

1974

Thomas Balmer, recently elected to another six-year term on the Oregon Supreme Court, writes, "We are empty-nesters, having deposited son Paul at Pomona in August, where he is studying Arabic and things international and seems to be thriving. Our daughter, Rebecca, is a senior at Oberlin, majoring in theater and comparative literature; it has been a great fit for her. We are enthusiastic Oberlin parents." E: thomas.balmer@ojd.state.or.us.

1975

James Anthony and his wife, Lynne, reside in Amherst, Ohio, where James works as medical director of the Occupational Health Center for Community Health Partners Regional Medical

No matter your journey, it began at Tappan Square

You may not have realized it then, but those many walks on the Square were the start of your path through life. Your planned gift will give future generations of Oberlin College students a head start on their own journeys. We offer a variety of “paths” to help you achieve your philanthropic goals:

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You receive a guaranteed income stream for life and a charitable deduction, and your gift provides future support for Oberlin.

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Center. • **James Russell Brown** teaches organ and harpsichord at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb. He continues as director of the Organ and Early Music Program at the Music Institute of Chicago, and as organist and director of music for St. Giles Episcopal Church in Northbrook, Ill. • **Mark Woodworth Harris** is president and COO for 286 Berlitz and ELS language centers in 50 countries. "Our ELS educational services has opened ELS American education centers in Shanghai, Ho Chi Minh City, and Istanbul to provide free information, advisement, and assistance to students who wish to pursue undergraduate degrees or advanced studies in the U.S.," he writes. "...International education is the foundation of peace!" • ⊕ **Carolyn Briggs Saniuk** retired in June 2007 after 30-plus years in education, and she has no trouble enjoying her newfound time. "The paper gets read, the celebrations in life are much more enjoyable, and I still have a to-do list a mile long," she writes. She and **Leo** have been happily married for 33 years. They will miss their Oberlin reunion in May, since son, Leo, will graduate from Brown University during that time. Carolyn's one professional



Brown

obligation remains pairing at a local, regional, and national level for USA wrestling, the governing body for olympic wrestling (freestyle/greco roman) in the U.S. Meanwhile, Leo writes that he also is enjoying retirement, because like Carolyn, now he can get the paper read and enjoy the mornings. "I (along with my family) keep too busy volunteering my (our) time to further real wrestling locally and nationally," he writes. "I am vicechair (no time for vice though!) of USA Wrestling Ohio, and that fills up my time along with doing all the home repairs I put off for all these years." • **Lucy Pinkston Schroth's** 28-year career as a small animal veterinarian includes 10 years spent in emergency and critical care. Throughout the years she has seen a great need for financial assistance for pet owners who cannot afford life-saving emergency care in a crisis. To help with this need, Lucy and her husband, Don, are setting up a nonprofit organization called Veterinary Emergency Funding Mission, Ltd, (VEFM). W: www.VEFM.org. B: <http://vefm.blogspot.com>. E: lp Schroth@yahoo.com, vefmmail@gmail.com. • **Martha Kirk Swartz** was inducted into the American Academy of Nursing as a new fellow in November. The fellowship recognizes her accomplishments in the nursing profession and affords her the opportunity to work with other leaders

in health care in addressing current issues. Martha is professor and associate dean for clinical and community affairs at Yale University School of Nursing, and she is editor of the *Journal of Pediatric Health Care*. She recently co-chaired a writing work group in collaboration with the Society of Pediatric Nurses and the American Nurses Association, which resulted in the publication of *Pediatric Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice*.

1977

Annelie Fahlstedt

and Patrick Little were married on November 2, 2008, in Montclair, N.J. The bridal party included the couple's five children. Fellow



Fahlstedt

Obie **Cynthia Heinberg** also was in attendance. E: afvln@yahoo.com. • **Anne Stausboll** was appointed chief executive officer of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, making her the first woman to manage the system in its 77-year history. Anne had been serving as the interim chief investment officer of the pension system. As the top officer she will manage 2,300 employees, a budget of more than \$332 million, as well as myriad operations.

Alumni Books and CDs

Alumni books and CDs are online! Visit *OAM's* Bookshelf and Music Box page at www.oberlin.edu/oam (scroll to the bottom). To add your recently published work to the list, write to us at alum.mag@oberlin.edu, typing "Bookshelf/Music Box" in the subject line, or mail your book or CD to Bookshelf/Music Box, *OAM*, 145 W. Lorain St., Oberlin, OH 44074. We accept works from commercial publishing houses, university presses, and most institutions, including government presses. All books mailed to the *OAM* are donated to the main library, in the author's name. Here is a sample of the titles and authors that appear online:

The Why of the Buy: Consumer Behavior and Fashion Marketing
Patricia Mink Rath '51, Stefani Bey,
Richard Petrizzi, and Penny Gill

**Make it Yourself:
Home Sewing, Gender, and Culture,
1890-1930**
Sarah A. Gordon '93

**Inhabiting Circumference,
Landscape Rituals, Urban Ground**
Mikyoung Kim '06

China Into Africa: Trade, Aid, and Influence
Edited by Robert I. Rotberg '55

**Dreaming Together:
Explore Your Dreams by Acting Them Out**
Jon Lipsky '65

**Marvels in the Muck:
Life in the Salt Marshes**
Doug Wechsler '73

Managing a Meditation Process
David R. Smock '58 and Amy L. Smith

**CD: Inspired Bach:
Music to Enhance Your Spirit**
All music selected and sequenced by
Joanna Laufer '79 and Kenneth S. Lewis



1978

Paul M. Herr, professor of marketing and chair of the marketing division of the Leeds School of Business at the University of Colorado, Boulder, was named the Virginia-Carolinas Professor of Purchasing in the Pamplin College of Virginia Tech last November. The professorship is awarded to a member of the faculty who will hold the title until retirement or departure from the university. Paul will join the Pamplin faculty in August. He is a fellow of the American Psychological Association, and currently serves on the editorial boards of three academic journals, including the *Journal of Consumer Research*.

1979

Amy Chen, **Deeana Jang**, **Debbie Wei**, and **Tom Lim** reviewed archival materials reflecting their student activism when the four returned to campus last October to participate in the reunion of Asian Pacific American alumni.



Chen



Kazlow

• **Susan Kazlow**, whose photography appeared in *Southern Living* and *Jezebel*, was featured in the Atlanta Photography Group's show, *Anna Skillman Selects*, last November and December. Susan has worked as a professional photographer for the past seven years.

• ⊕ **Leslie Schwartz Leff's** article "Gremlins," about a teaching strategy she devised, was published in the November 2008 *Responsive Classroom Newsletter*. Leslie became a certified responsive classroom-

consulting teacher last summer.



Losey

• **Kenneth Losey** teaches writing at Jiangnan University in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, China. Wuxi is west of Shanghai, near Suzhou. The city and campus are on the shores of Lake Tai. "I would love to make contact with any Obies in China," he writes. E: klosey08@gmail.com. B: <http://kenlosey.blogspot.com/>.

1980

David Wank is professor of sociology at Sophia University in Tokyo and is in his fourth year as director of the graduate program in global studies, which he helped found. He pursues research on multiple projects in regard to China and globalization. He recently co-edited *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China* (Stanford University Press, 2009) and the *Dynamics of Global Society: Theory and Prospects* (Sophia University Press, 2007).



Wank

1981

A reviewer in the *New York Times*' December 3, 2008, issue called **Alison Bechdel's** comic strip anthology, *The Essential Dykes to Watch Out For*, "deeply amusing," and said it "crackles with one-liners," concluding "her crazy lesbians seem saner than the rest of us, and beyond beautiful." Alison has been producing the strip—about the lives and loves of an articulate group of lesbians in a city that resembles Minneapolis—for more than 20 years.

• **Laura Fishleder Michaelides** resides in Houston, where she is the principal and owner of Four Square Design Studio, an interior design firm that does residential and commercial projects. The firm recently entered two projects into the Decorative Center Houston/PaperCity Design Competition. It tied for first place in the residential design category and took first place for a single residential space. Laura's children, Matthew, 16, and Sofia, 12, are doing well, as is her husband, Evan. E: lauramichaelides@sbcglobal.net. W: www.foursquaredesignstudio.com.



Michaelides

1982

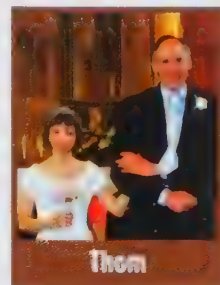
Ellen Nierenberg and her family finally made the trip from Norway to visit **Liz Knapp** and her family in Colorado. "We were able to fit in a geology field trip," Liz writes. "Notice the fresh dinosaur tracks



Nierenberg

in the background of our picture." Ellen lives on a dairy farm and is an academic librarian at a university in Hamar. She recently published her master's thesis (about anti-terror legislation and libraries). Liz lives in Boulder and develops interpretive exhibits. Both would love to hear from any long-lost pals. E: eknapp165@comcast.net, nierenbe@online.no.

• **Margaret Thom** and **Brian O'Neill** were married on June 21, 2008, in State College, Pa. The couple lives in Mukwonago, Wis.



Thom

1983

Joyce Luhrs and her marketing company, Luhrs & Associates, hosted a drive that collected more than 800 pounds of new and gently used school supplies, children's books, and linens for the Ramapough Mountain Indians, Inc., a nonprofit organization based in Mahwah, N.J., that provides much-needed services to the Ramapough Lenape Indian Nation. The drives were conducted as part of Luhrs & Associates' In the Community Program, an annual community service project that assists nonprofit organizations working with populations in need.

1984

Christopher Recklitis married Mark Vining, his partner of 15 years, at their home in Worcester, Mass. In attendance were **Janet Gaber**, **Carolyn Krasner**, **Linda Lipkin**, and **Lara Jordan-James '89**. Christopher is a psychologist and health researcher at Dana-Faber Cancer Institute in Boston. He and Mark have two sons, Lucas, 8, and Adam, 1.



Recklitis

1985

⊕ **Anne Adams** belatedly announces the arrival of her daughter, Anneke Min-Ji Han Schnauber, from Korea. She arrived in February 2007, "and her procrastinating mother never got around to posting about it," Anne writes. Anneke's older brother, Johannes Gaalen, and her father, Tom Schnauber, also were excited to welcome her



When **Beth Fouhy** '83 (pictured right) signed on to cover Hillary Rodham Clinton's 2008 presidential bid for the Associated Press, she never imagined being part of an epic contest that will go down in history as one of the most compelling presidential elections in recent memory.

Beth covered the campaign from the day Clinton entered the race in January 2007 through June 2008, when the former first lady conceded the Democratic nomination to Barack Obama. In countless plane flights and hundreds of campaign events, Beth watched Clinton, once the "inevitable" nominee, transform into a scrappy underdog and champion for working class families.

With Clinton gone, Beth climbed aboard the Straight Talk Express with Republican nominee John McCain and covered his candidacy through the general election. She was there for Sarah Palin's debut on the national stage and followed the Alaska governor on several campaign trips.

Along the way, Beth squeezed in a few weeks on the campaign trail with Obama and covered his presidential transition. She asked him the first question at a November news conference, where he unveiled his economic team.

All told, Beth traveled with candidates to 40 states in 2008 and spent more nights away from home than she cares to admit. She's back home in Pelham, N.Y., with her husband, Joe Marty, and their 12-year-old son, Jonathan. Beth is launching a new beat covering the nation's governors and getting used to not living out of a suitcase.

home. Anne and family reside just outside of Boston, where Anne is "teaching voice a teeny tiny bit," while her husband teaches music at a liberal arts college.



1986

⊕ **Chloe Bird**'s coauthored book, *Gender and Health: The Effects of Constrained Choices and Social Policies*, has gotten excellent reviews in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and *Psychology of Women Quarterly*.



1987

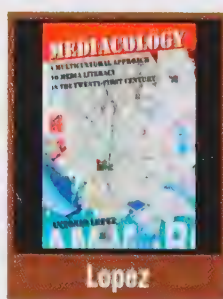


March 29.

Seth Joseph and his wife, **Abbey Hand**, whose wedding last year was attended by numerous classmates, celebrated their one-year anniversary on

1988

⊕ **Antonio Lopez** recently published *Mediacology: A Multicultural Approach to Media Literacy in the 21st Century*, which he calls "an effort to bridge media literacy with eco-literacy." W://mediacology.com/the-book/.



1990

Janna Baty has been living in New York City—specifically, in the Bronx, right by Yankee Stadium—for about 18 months and really enjoys the area. After teaching at UMass Amherst, she began an appointment as assistant professor of voice at Yale School of Music in the fall. There, she runs the Undergraduate and Graduate Secondary Voice Lessons program. She continues to perform and, this past year, originated the role of pioneering theater impresario Laura Keane

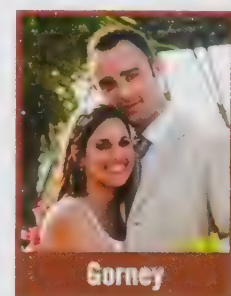
in the world premiere recording and production of *Our American Cousin*, a new opera based on the last night of Abraham Lincoln's life. Last spring, she toured with Boston's Longwood Symphony Orchestra to England, singing Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* in a series of concerts to benefit the Marie Curie Cancer Institute. She recently returned from Brazil, where she studied Portuguese and conducted research at the Museu Villa-Lobos in Rio as part of a Marion and Jasper Whiting Fellowship. Her husband, jazz guitarist/singer/composer Doug Wamble, received a grant from Chamber Music America and, in November, premiered a new long-format composition for large jazz ensemble based on the writings of William Faulkner. Their son, Charlie, 3, is grooving on preschool, swimming, playing the maracas, They Might Be Giants, and Thomas the Tank Engine. However, whenever Janna practices, he says, "Mommy, no sing. Please."

1992

Jana Katsuyama joined the KTVU Channel 2 news team as a full-time staff reporter last January. She formerly worked at the station as a freelance reporter. Her professional accolades include a 2007 award from the Society of Professional Journalists, as well as several Emmy Award nominations.

1993

Rachel Gorney and Manu Malet were married on the banks of the Siene in Paris, France, on July 26, 2008. Among the guests were **Riwa Komatsubara**, stepsister Leslie Gibbons Bazzett '91, Jeremy Marcus and Robin Gise, both '94, and Rachel's stepmother, Beverly Gibbons '63. Rachel's freelance translation business, Harkness Communications, is doing well. Manu is surviving the financial crisis in



the IT department of the French bank BNP-Paribas. • ⊕ **Joshua Handley** and his wife, Biba, recently moved to Kigali, Rwanda, with their two children, Amal, 12, and Kayla, 4. Biba is associate director for the Peace Corps in Rwanda, while Joshua is doing contract IT work for organizations in Rwanda and the U.S. He is also starting up an offshore software development business, where Rwandan engineers will write and test software for companies in the U.S. • ⊕ **Stacy Mates**

writes, "It's been a whirlwind year. After three years of driving across Ohio to see my long-distance partner, Gavin LaRose, I finally moved to Ann Arbor, Mich., in November 2007. Gavin and I were married June 29, 2008, with only nine days of planning in what we are calling 'elopement with family.' Both of our immediate families were present, and friend **Gavin Chuck** officiated the ceremony. I'm now in my second semester at the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources, working toward a master's degree in conservation biology and agro-ecology and discovering my inner insect nerd."



1994

⊕ **Cristin Hubbard Miller** and Billy Miller welcomed Lila June Miller on June 4, 2008, in New



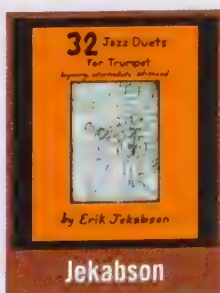
York. "We barely made it to the hospital in time but are now all well and enjoying getting to know New York City from a totally new perspective," Cristin writes. •

Matthew Paddock wants you to know about the

Oberlin alumni group on LinkedIn—700 members and growing as of last December (www.linkedin.com). "Follow this link to join the group and stay in touch with fellow Obies on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/e/gis/50196. You'll love it. It's a way of life," he writes.

1995

⊕ **Erik Jekabson** recently self-published a jazz duet book for trumpet under his publishing company, Jekab's Music (www.erikjekabson.com). *32 Jazz Duets for Trumpet* features music for beginning to advanced players and is usable for many different treble clef instruments as well as trumpet. • **Benjamin Lapidu** was interviewed by Chico Alvarez on WBAI's *New World Gallery* in New York. An audio stream of his November interview is archived at <http://archive.wbai.org/>. Benjamin, an assistant professor of music, teaches Caribbean music at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York.



Regional Roundup

What's happening in your region? Find out at ObieWeb, www.oberlin.edu/alumni/oberlinClubs.

▼ Chicago, Ill. — An Evening with Professor Pablo Mitchell

On January 17, José W. Meléndez, 2001 class president and Oberlin Latino Alumni Association chair, hosted Pablo Mitchell, chair of the history department, at his home in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago. During the three-hour gathering, Pablo spoke about his current and upcoming research and publications while attendees enjoyed drinks and boquitas. All in attendance had a wonderful time, and said they were thrilled at the opportunity to eat, drink, and converse with fellow Obies after a week of sub-zero temperatures.



If you're interested in serving on the steering committee of your local alumni club, contact John Keller, director of regional activities and education, at 440-775-8692 or e-mail john.keller@oberlin.edu.

▼ Washington, D.C. — The First 100 Days: Challenges and Opportunities for the Obama Administration

On January 22, Washington, D.C., area alumni listened to a panel discussion on challenges faced by the Obama administration. Patrick Clawson '73 served as moderator, and panelists included Peter Lavoy '83 on foreign policy, John Rother '69 on health care reform, Carl Gerber '58 on the environment, and Warren Weissman '80 on global finance. The event included a silent auction fundraiser for the D.C. internship fund, which supports Oberlin students who pursue summer public-service internships in the Washington, D.C., area.

—John Keller



1996

Katherine Readey

and her husband, Lee Chilcote, welcomed Emily Ann Chilcote on January 4. "She has been the most wonderful, adorable bundle of joy." •

⊕ **Rahel Smith** and Caroline Boyden were married on July 27, 2008, in Berkeley, Calif., followed by a reception with much dancing. Alison Ching '97 (Rahel's first-year roommate in Harkness) and her partner, Tammy Siu, were present for the festivities. Caroline and Rahel live in Berkeley,



and hope to stay in the area for many years. Rahel is a controller and human resources director for a small business in San Francisco. Caroline is a web designer for the University of California, Berkeley. W: www.cwrench.com/wedding.



1997

Alethea Crippen Fleming celebrated the opening of her medical practice, the Vital Aging Clinic, in Anacortes, Wash. She graduated in 2007 with a PhD in naturopathic medicine

where are they now?

Ry Russo-Young: Writer, Producer, Director, Actress

Ry Russo-Young '03 hadn't had a good night's sleep in more than a week when *OAM* phoned her New York apartment in late January. Not to mention she had gotten off the plane from Park City, Utah, just hours earlier. Should we talk a little later? "No, no, this is good," she quickly assured in a raspy but welcoming voice. The 27-year-old had just returned from the Sundance Film Festival, where *You Won't Miss Me*, the feature film she directed, co-wrote, and produced had premiered. The adrenaline was still pumping.

"It was really insane—parties, press stuff—you're operating on four hours of sleep a night. It was intense, but good." Besides, she added, "I just got in last night and slept for 13 hours."

As she continued to talk—touching on past and future projects—it was as if a fog machine cued and *OAM*'s remember-when reel started to churn.

OAM first met Russo-Young in February 2004, when she and Clara Latham '04 stopped by our office to inform the staff that their 10-minute film, *Babes in Toyland*, had been screened at the Torino Film Festival in Italy. They were so excited. Shot in Oberlin in 2002, the film starred Russo-Young and Latham as women who existed "in a colorful and deranged alternate universe in which they were the center of attention, the result of which was chaos and death."

Babes in Toyland, one of Russo-Young's many student projects, was done to "subvert and critique issues of sex and violence in Hollywood cinema," she said. Not too ambitious for someone who, by age 15, had already received favorable reviews from the *New York Times* for her one-act play *Hopscotch*—performed at the New York Inter-

national Fringe Festival, no less.

Her film repertoire would later include the 2005 movie *Marion*, a riveting, three-screen deconstruction of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, which the *New York Times* called "visually interesting and unexpected." *Marion* garnered several awards, including the jury award for Best Experimental Film at the 2006 South by Southwest (SXSW) Film Festival. Another film, *Orphans* (now available on Netflix and Amazon.com), tells the heartbreaking story of two reunited sisters. It won a special jury award in the narrative feature competition at the SXSW Film Festival in 2007. And of course, *You Won't Miss Me*, the 2009 portrait of Shelly Brown, a 23-year-old alienated urban misfit recently released from a psychiatric hospital, landed Russo-Young at the largest independent cinema festival in the U.S. Out of 9,000 submissions, Sundance chose just 200.

"Though it's awesome that I made it to Sundance, the ultimate goal is to be able to make another movie," Russo-Young said, her voice bringing the interview back to the present. "Yes, you do have to have a lot of confidence, but I think it's more wanting to communicate with people. Having people see what they wouldn't normally see."

"I come from an unconventional, open family. My parents are lesbians," the writer, producer, director, and actress offered. "They aren't artists, but they are bucking the system. I have so much respect for them and want to be as brave as they are."

You Won't Miss Me is making its way around the film-festival circuit, including the Brooklyn Academy of Music festival in New York and the Method Film Festival in Calabasas, California, where the film's lead actress, Stella Schnabel, picked up the top acting award. Russo-Young is slated to act in a movie this fall. In 2007, she appeared as Rocco in *Hannah Takes the Stairs*, released by IFC Films.

For more, visit www.ryrussoyoung.com/home/.

—Yvonne Gay Fowler



Robert Maxwell



Stella Schnabel as Shelly Brown in *You Won't Miss Me*.

from Bastyr University in Seattle. Somewhere in the middle of med school, Alethea and her husband, Tor, were joined by their son, Ulrich, now 3. W: www.vitalagingclinic.com. E: alethea@world.oberlin.edu. "Please stop by on your way to the San Juan Islands!" • **Joseph**



Gordon

Gordon and Alice Wilkerson were married on July 12, 2008, at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in Annapolis, Md. The couple was joined by

grandmother of the groom, Vivian Sadin '46; father of the groom, Michael Gordon '72; mother of the groom, Diana Spears '74; and friends, including Dave Schneider '96, Jason Quinn, Ari Reeves, and Rhona Campbell, all '98. • ⊕ **Devon Strolovitch** has hosted *Fog City Blues* on KALW 91.7 FM in San Francisco for the past two years. The program focuses on local blues artists and venues. In December, the California Honeydrops—Lech Wierzynski and Nansamba Ssensalo, both '04, and Ben Malament '06—gave a live performance on the show before the release party for their CD, *Soul Tub*. Audio of the radio show is available at www.fogcityblues.com/playlists/081210.htm.

1998

⊕ **Elana Gartner Golden**

and David Golden welcomed Jeremy William Golden on October 7, 2008, in New York City. "David and I are doing well," Elana writes, "and Jeremy's three first-time grandparents, first-time great-grandmother, first-time uncle, and future aunt are all completely thrilled to have a little boy to dote on."



Golden

1999



Reeves

⊕ **Evan Reeves** and **Chris Moraes** welcomed baby girl Keila Moraes Reeves on October 1, 2007, in Berkeley, Calif. Keila is enjoying the com-

pany of her older brother, Joaquim, 4. • In the last year, **Dan Spalding** has earned black belts in Aikido and jujitsu and a master's degree in

teaching English as a second language. He teaches ESL at an Oakland, Calif., community college and develops ESL curricula for janitors for Service Employees International Union. He also continues to be a part of the Midnight Special Law Collective and is working with the Ruckus Society on creating data security protocols for activist nonprofits. Dan is always on the lookout for the intersection of adult education and organizing for social justice.

2000



Silver

Jami Silver and Chris Lett were married on April 26, 2008, at Camp Jewell YMCA in Colebrook, Conn. "We had a small ceremony with close friends and family, and our beloved Bassett hounds as our ring-bearers," Jami

writes. "We have lived in Connecticut for most of our lives and both 'grew up' in the small town of Colebrook." The couple recently bought their first home in Simsbury. Jami works at Wesleyan University as assistant dean of admissions. • **Amy Wolf** and Bennett Baumer were married at the Angel Orensanz Foundation on the Lower East Side of New York on October 4, 2008. They met while volunteering for *The Independent*, a New York-based newspaper. Many Obies were in attendance, including **Conor Duran**, **Jihad Ideen**, **Michael Krantz**, **Erin Sickler**, and **Shannon Springer**; Pauline Shapiro '01; Catrina Perry '02; Sarah Meckler and Joy Smith, both '98; Maura Brown, Charlotte Byrd, Elizabeth Latimer, and Tickey Makgopela, all '99; as well as Haley Heidemann. Amy works as a communications officer at New York Community Trust and heads IndyVideo, a collaborative video production team at the New York Independent Media Center. Bennett is a housing organizer with Housing Conservation Coordinators.



Wolf

2001

Flutist **Claire Chase** was awarded first prize in the prestigious 2008 Concert Artists Guild Competition. Winners of the annual competition receive two-year management contracts. Claire's award also carries with it the Victor and Sono

Elmaleh Award of \$5,000. She is founder and executive director of the International Contemporary Ensemble. Her solo album, *aliento* (New Focus Records), features world premiere recordings for flute and electronics and will be released in March. • **Jessa Klotz New** and Blake New welcomed their second daughter, Maia Grace, on December 12, 2007. Jessa and Blake reside in Oberlin with their daughters, Madalyn, 4, and



Tuong

Maia, 1. • ⊕ **Mandy Tuong** and Michael Rhodes were married on May 25, 2008, in Minneapolis. Obies in attendance were Walter "Hudie"

Broughton, Gloria Kim, John Tarcza, and Hannah Waldman, all '02; Johanna Dorn, Florence Gill, and Larissa Smith, all '03; Dan Kelliher '75; and Pamela Hoopes '78. Mandy and Michael honeymooned in St. John. They live in Uptown, Minn., with their two dogs.

2002

Jason Cutmore released his first commercial solo piano CD on the Centaur Records label, a disc of Manuel de Falla's transcriptions and original works for piano. In recent years, he has given concerts in Hungary, Germany, India, and across Canada and the U.S., published an article on Spanish music, and collaborated with organist **Daniel Sullivan** as the New York Piano-Organ Duo. Jason lives in a suburb of New York City. W: www.JasonCutmore.com. • ⊕ After dreaming about it for years, **Alex Zorach** launched Merit Exchange, which combines elements of a community currency system with features of a social networking web site and classified ads. Merit Exchange, among other things, explores new economic ideas with an eye toward sustainability and economic justice. W: <http://meritexchange.com/>.

2005

⊕ **Katharine Healy** has accepted a position at the Arc of Philadelphia/PIDDC (Philadelphia Developmental Disabilities Corporation) in

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Obieweb at
www.oberlin.edu/alumni.

Pennsylvania as associate director of cultural arts.

• **Erika Kulnys-Brian** returned to campus last December to perform in Oberlin's World AIDS Week activities. Erika, a classically-trained, queer singer-songwriter, poet, composer, and performance artist, lead a workshop about songwriting and social activism. • **Alycia Usher Perez** married Orlando Perez on January 4 in Jamaica. Obies in attendance were **Dena Iverson** ("maid of honor and former Oberlin roommate, matched brilliantly by ResLife"), Diana Wueger (pictured in blue), and Ethan Baldwin, both '06. Alycia and Orlando met at a house party in Oberlin in 2004. **Kathleen Salerno** and Jonathon Swiderski '02 were married on October 26, 2008, in their hometown of Pittsburgh. Obies in attendance included **Rebecca Brachman**, **Phoebe Harmon**, **Harlo Holmes**, **Elizabeth Knight**, **Max Lieberman**, **Claire Lesnick**, **Wyna Liu**, and **Adam Lanphier**; Duncan Richards and Ariel Samach, both '06; and Morris Zelditch '51, Jonathon's grandfather.



2006

Katherine Au and Travis Oman '05 were married on July 19, 2008, at the Mountain Winery in Saratoga, Calif., with more than 20 Oberlin



alumni in attendance. The wedding was appropriately officiated by Oberlin's track coach, Jason Hudson, since the couple met as members of the

Oberlin Track and Field team. The bridal party included maid of honor Darci Leonhart '05, best man **Adam Mores**, bridesmaid Katahdin Cook '08, and groomsman **Shean Perry**. Katherine and Travis honeymooned in Ireland. • **Avery Monsen** published *Pirate's Log: A Handbook for Aspiring Swashbucklers* (Chronicle Books). The book is a funny creative writing and activity book for 8- to 12-year-olds. It also has a built-in book light "for writing at night or for finding your keys, if you happen to be an 8- to 12-year-old with keys."



• **Anne Rainwater** attended the Bang on a

Can Summer Festival last July, working with composer David Lang and percussionist David Cossin. She is in her first year of graduate school in Manhattan School of Music's new contemporary performance program. • **Ben Sinclair** was the film category winner of the "Race to BE USA" contest as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week. The November contest sought excellence in creative entrepreneurship in 78 countries. Ben won for developing a web-based business that harnesses the Internet to pitch user-generated story ideas visually and globally. He also was awarded second place in the "Diet Dew Surprising Facts Contest" last July. Ben met with California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and spoke at the Governor's Conference for Entrepreneurship and Small Business on young entrepreneurship.

How to Submit Class Notes and Photos

Share your news by sending class notes and photos to:

Class Notes

145 W. Lorain St.,
Oberlin, OH 44074

E-mail notes and high resolution images to alum.mag@oberlin.edu.

Class notes are ideally between 50 and 75 words; the more concise, the better chance your note will appear as sent, although the editors reserve the right to edit for clarity.

Once class notes, photographs, and suggested news items are received by the OAM, it may take up to two issues before they are published. The OAM publishes quarterly—winter, spring, summer, and fall.



SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATES



The **East College Street Project** in downtown Oberlin (across from the Oberlin Inn and next to the Apollo Movie Theater) is under construction. This mixed-use green development features new restaurants, shops, an Oberlin College Art Gallery and condos ranging from one to three bedrooms. Many of the people who have deposits on apartments thus far are alumni interested in returning to be part of the Oberlin Community. If you've ever thought of living or retiring in Oberlin, please contact us for more information.

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Losses in the Oberlin Family

FACULTY/STAFF

Josette Mignone Donohoe worked with former College photographer Arthur "Pinky" Princehorn and at the Rathskeller as assistant manager during the mid to late 1940s. A French war bride who came to the U.S. in 1946, she and her husband, Carter Donohoe '50, lived on campus in one of the many trailers set up for veterans returning from the war. She and Carter later resided in Tenney House. Mrs. Donohoe was well-known by the 1946 to 1950 classes, even appearing with them on the cover of the December 1947 issue of the OAM. During the 1950s and '60s, Mrs. Donohoe supported her husband with his duties as class representative in planning reunion activities. She was also an active member of the LeCirle Des Conference Francaise of Cleveland and in recent years served as a member of the French Connection and the Alliances Francaise. She died February 29, 2008, leaving her husband of 62 years; a daughter, Mignone Donohoe '81; a son; four grandchildren, including Margot Hanley '10; and two great-grandchildren.

Dr. Robert J. Panos, a long-time resident of Oberlin, died August 25, 2008, in Grand Rapids, Mich. A native of Chicago, Dr. Panos earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the University of Chicago. Recipient of a Fulbright scholarship, he studied in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1966 and spent the following years employed by the American Council on Education and National Computer Systems before joining the staff at Oberlin College, where he held the positions of

associate dean of developmental services and associate dean of students. He was active in various educational organizations and had numerous articles published. He leaves four children and seven grandchildren.

1933

Wade Sutherin Smith enrolled at Oberlin after operating his own advertising agency and letter shop while working for the *Nashua Telegraph*. He later worked for the National Municipal League, where he spent 20 years writing a column, "Taxation and Finance," in the league's monthly magazine, the *National Municipal Review*. He also performed editorial and technical work for the National Pay Your Taxes Campaign, which provided his entry into the municipal bond fraternity. Mr. Smith joined the Municipal Service Department of Dun & Bradstreet in 1936, becoming director of municipal research 20 years later and eventually divisional vice president. He also served as vice president of Moody's Investors Service and would later publish his book, the *Appraisal of Municipal Credit Risk*. Mr. Smith died September 25, 2008, leaving two sons, Wade '59 and Guy '65, MA '68, four grandchildren, including Deborah Ann Smith '89, and two great-grandchildren. His wife, Helen Agnes Kilgore '31, preceded him in death.

Elinor Elizabeth Cutler Webb graduated with honors from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and later supervised all public school music programs in Fredonia, Pa. She and her husband, Rev. Robert Webb, sang in the Bethlehem Bach Choir for 10 years and performed many public duets for piano and cello, often in conjunction with the Bach Festival. She also worked as a librarian and spent more than 20 years as an electroencephalograph technician. She assumed a number of volunteer duties throughout the years, including working with the Red Cross. Mrs. Webb died November 22, 2008, leaving a son, a daughter, three grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Her husband preceded her in death.

Please send alumni death notices to OAM at 145 W. Lorain St., Oberlin, OH 44074 or fax to (440) 775-6575. E-mail notices to alum.mag@oberlin.edu

1935

Lois Naomi Clouse, a vocalist, was also talented in instrumental music, directing, instructing bands and orchestras, and teaching vocal and instrumental classes. She taught elementary music in Pennsylvania and Ohio for 43 years and enjoyed singing in and directing her church choir. Ms. Clouse died August 13, 2008, leaving three nieces and several grand-nieces and nephews.

1939

Marian Rinehart Penn attended Westminster College in New Wilmington, Pa. She earned her master's degree in library science at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, and worked as a librarian at DePaw University and at the University of Bridgeport before retiring in 1985. She enjoyed a host of activities, including reading, writing, painting, photography, genealogy, and most of all, her many dear friends. Mrs. Penn died January 12, leaving a son and several nieces and nephews. Her husband, William Rinehart '36, preceded her in death.

Howard C. Walmsley worked briefly for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in New York City before serving in the Army during WWII. He studied for his actuarial exams while serving as a mess sergeant in North Africa, and later drove large machinery while building airfields in Italy with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. After the war, he took a job with Ohio National Life and moved to Cincinnati in 1947. A fellow of the American Academy of Actuaries, he was a comptroller and vice president during his 37-year career there. He also served as a vestry at his church and enjoyed playing bridge, golfing, dancing, and fishing. Mr. Walmsley died October 18, 2008, leaving his wife of 60 years, Marjorie, two daughters, and four grandchildren.

1943

Charles R. Soergel, a former mayor of the Franklin Park borough in Pittsburgh, died December 18, 2008. After graduating from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Mr. Soergel worked as a master musical instrument repairman and an elementary band teacher, retiring in 1981. Influenced by his family's history—his ancestors arrived in the Pittsburgh area from Germany in 1848—he formed the History Committee of Franklin

Park, which in 2006 researched and published the borough's first history, *Franklin Park Stories*. During WWII, Mr. Soergel enlisted in the Army Air Corps and flew B-24 bombers. While stationed in Fort Worth, Texas, before leaving for Europe, he married Ruth Wolf. Before returning to Franklin Park in 1949, the couple made their home in Elkhart, Ind., where Mr. Soergel learned the musical instrument repair

trade. He later served 16 years as Franklin Park's first full-term mayor. He leaves his wife, a son, two daughters, and six grandchildren.

Robert L. Solender, a newspaper executive and real estate consultant, died November 10, 2008, in Dallas. From 1949 to 1975, he was a director and shareholder with the Times Herald Printing Company of Dallas. He had

been appointed vice president and general manager in 1969. From 1975 to 1994, he was president of Robert L. Solender, Inc., a Dallas real estate consulting, brokerage, and development company that was responsible for several landmark real estate transactions. He also served as director of the North Park National Bank. An active member in his community, Mr. Solender was a board member and board pres-

MARY ANN DANENBERG

Mary Ann Danenberg, Emerita Teacher of Pianoforte at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, widow of the 11th president of Oberlin College Emil Danenberg, and major benefactor of the program named in her husband's honor, died April 24, 2008, at the age of 81.

Mary Ann earned her bachelor of music in piano performance in 1948 and her master of music degree in 1951, both from Oberlin College. Her marriage to then-Assistant Professor of Pianoforte Emil Danenberg took place in June 1951. Oberlin remained their home for the rest of their lives. Throughout the years in which her husband served Oberlin College, first as professor of pianoforte, then as dean of the Conservatory of Music, and finally as president of the College, Mary Ann continued to teach piano, privately and on an intermittent adjunct basis at the Conservatory.

In 1994 the College's interdisciplinary Danenberg Oberlin-In-London Program, named for Emil and established shortly after his death, was in its 11th year. It had already occupied four different sets of shared premises, but that summer it had finally moved into pleasant and self-contained premises in Fitzroy Square, with an eight-year lease. Relief and celebration were felt by all who held the program dear, but the move had been costly. Mary Ann chose this moment to make a gift in her husband's memory of a kind both unusual and rejuvenating to the spirit of creative experiment in the Danenberg Program.

First, she consulted with those close to the daily operation of the program about the immediate needs for the furnishing of the program's new premises and the ongoing intellectual and social needs of the students. She then made a gift of \$25,000 over a five-year period (later extended to \$53,000 over 10 years). Mary Ann was by nature a practical and unostentatious person who lived simply, enjoyed modest luxuries with real appreciation, was passionate about music, had a quick but unsentimental and tough sympathy with students, a strong sense of humor, and an enormously kind heart. The terms of her gift precisely reflected these qualities. She stipulated that a piano and a television set should be purchased for the new premises, as well as plants and furniture for the outside areas and cushioned window seats for the main room.

Each semester an outside lecturer was to be brought in to give an Emil C. Danenberg Memorial Lecture for the students, and the entire group was to be taken to a classical concert (symphony, opera, ballet, or other performance). Other monies could be expended on further acquisitions for the library, better theater seating, equipment and furnishings, and access for students to research facilities and special opportunities. An annual report on the use of funds and needs for the future was to be made. Pragmatic, simple, warm.

As time went by and my reports went in, I began to look forward to the letters of encouragement and support that came back from Mary Ann, along with the annual funds. Her interest in the program was always mind-on and hands-off; she never once tried to influence or control beyond the original broad terms of her gift, but she acknowledged and urged forward every new use of her money. The messages of thanks she received from students, most of them in the form of notes on concert programs, were ones that I know she treasured.

Over the course of a decade, Mary Ann Danenberg quietly made a difference to the lives of a long succession of our students. Many students got their first taste of grand opera thanks to Mary Ann; the volunteer tutoring and other services our students sometimes undertook had their travel expenses covered by her; the little tape-recorders we lent students who were interviewing people were provided by Mary Ann; and so on, from the big event to the tiny subsidy.

Now, at her death, Mary Ann Danenberg's hugely generous bequest to Oberlin College—endowing a large fund for the Danenberg Program—secures the continuation of many of these same activities and goals and ensures that whatever form Oberlin's foreign study endeavour may take in the future it will be invigorated by the staunch, quiet, determined support of this modest woman. Characteristically, she requested that there be no formal service of commemoration for her. I hope and expect that the program Mary Ann loved will prove a worthy memorial to her and to her generosity to Oberlin College and its students.

GWYNETH LOVE directed the Danenberg Program from 1983 to 2006.

ident of three major Dallas social agencies and a trustee of the Southwestern Medical Foundation. He also served as a skipper in the Navy during WWII, achieving the rank of lieutenant. He leaves his wife, Ellen Karelsen Solender '44, a sister, Sylvia Solender Shapiro '38, two daughters, including Katherine Solender '77, a son, two grandchildren, three nieces, and three nephews.

1944

Anne B. Coggeshall attended Oberlin for two years before studying at Columbia Teachers College in New York City, majoring in music. As an active member of her Schenectady, N.Y., community, she gave generously of her time and talents to a number of organizations, including the board of the Environmental Clearinghouse of Schenectady. An accomplished pianist, Mrs. Coggeshall sang with the Octavos Oratorio Society, frequented area concerts, and was considered an excellent amateur artist. She died October 21, 2008, leaving her husband, Almy, of 62 years, a son, a daughter, three grandchildren, a great-grandchild, two sisters, and several nieces and nephews.

Lowell E. Rinehart served in the Navy during WWII and opened and operated Rinehart Hardware in Attica, Ohio, for many years. He also enjoyed golfing and vacationing at Bay Point on Lake Erie. Mr. Rinehart died July 2, 2008, leaving his wife, Alberta Sutton, four daughters, a brother, two sisters, seven grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

1946

Gretchen Engstrom Stringer, a leader in the volunteer community who carried the Olympic torch through Buffalo, N.Y., in 1996 and was the founding president of Central Referral Service in New York, died January 6. Mrs. Stringer was world-renowned for her expertise in volunteer administration, gathered from decades of service on boards of trustees of area nonprofit organizations and other volunteer work. She also authored several books on volunteerism and served as a delegate to the White House Conference on Small Business in 1996. After Oberlin she earned certificates in teaching from the University of Pittsburgh and from Buffalo State College. She also earned a master's degree in business policy from the University of Buffalo. A former teacher, Mrs. Stringer served on the

Clarence Central School Board and with the Girl Scout Council of Buffalo, among others. Her volunteer work was recognized with a number of honors, including the Junior League's Susan Reid Greene Russell Award and two nominations for the Athena Award. In 2001, she was inducted into the Western New York Women's Hall of Fame, and the Volunteer Administrators of Western New York established the annual Gretchen Stringer Award in 2005. She leaves two daughters and two sons. Her husband of 38 years, Loren Stringer, preceded her in death.

1947

Arthur A. Rasch spent many years working at Eastman Kodak in Rochester, N.Y., where he took part in a variety of creative scientific projects as a leader in their research lab. An avid outdoorsman, Mr. Rasch climbed many of the Adirondack peaks and camped and fished in the wilderness areas of Quebec for several years. He died January 12, 2008, leaving two daughters, three sisters, including Eunice McWharter '51 and Elena Speidel '58, two nieces, and a nephew. His wife, Cecily Spillman Rasch '49, and a son preceded him in death.

1948

Anna Conklin worked for Fidelity Bank in Wynnewood, Pa., before relocating to New London, where she served as an executive board member at her church. She also served as treasurer of a women's fellowship. She died December 14, 2008, leaving several nieces and nephews.

Rev. Goldwin Smith Pollard died December 1, 2008, at his home in Rydal, Pa., leaving four children, three grandchildren, four step grandchildren, and numerous great-grandchildren.

1950

Mary E. Metcalf continued her studies in music, violin, and piano in Paris, France, after graduating from Oberlin. She earned a master's degree in fine arts at New York University and worked for a number of publishing companies as a book reviewer and sales promoter. Her last appointment was as development director for a museum. She also enjoyed playing the organ for her church in Northfield, Ore., and was active in the Democratic Party for several years. She served her community as a selectwoman and library trustee, among other

duties. Ms. Metcalf died November 3, 2008, leaving a son, a daughter, and one grandson.

1951

Dr. William J. Lange earned his PhD at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in physics and mathematics. He worked as a research physicist at Westinghouse Research Laboratory in Pittsburgh, for 35 years and as president of the American Vacuum Society. In retirement he played senior softball and managed many teams, helped senior citizens with their taxes, and taught English as a second language. Dr. Lange died November 20, 2008. Survivors include his wife of 57 years, Jeanne Walton Lange '51, three daughters, a son, three sisters, 12 grandsons, and one granddaughter.

1953

Rev. Arthur Murray Goodwin died August 21, 2008. He and his wife, Nancy '53, moved from Wilmington, Del., last July to a senior center in Hartford, Conn., to be closer to their daughter, two grandsons, and friends. He also leaves a son.

1954

Rev. Alvin D. Kauffman was a Congregational-United Church of Christ pastor in churches in New York, Massachusetts, and Michigan for 35 years. He died July 17, 2008, leaving his wife, Sara MA '55, two children, and three grandchildren.

1955

Dr. John Franklin Mardock graduated from the University of Kansas Medical School in 1959 and completed his residency in Kansas and his internship in Salt Lake City. He practiced psychiatry in Colorado and Arizona for much of his medical career. He was also an officer in the Army National Guard. He enjoyed travel and music and was a member of the International Wine and Food Society, Paradise Valley Chapter, and the American Institute of Wine and Food. He died March 6, 2008, leaving two daughters, a sister, and a brother. His wife, Edna, preceded him in death.

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1956

Garth P. McCormick, professor emeritus of applied science at George Washington University (GWU) and a preeminent leader in the field of mathematical optimization, served two years in the Army before earning a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Michigan. In 1960, he joined the Operations Research Office at Johns Hopkins University, which transitioned into the Research Analysis Corporation in McLean, Va. In 1971, he worked in the Department of Operations Research at GWU. His influential work with Anthony Fiacco, *Nonlinear Programming: Sequential Unconstrained Minimization Techniques* (Society for Industrial & Applied Mathematics), was awarded the Lanchester Prize in Operations Research in 1968. The work was reissued in 1990 as part of the society's Classics in Applied Mathematics series. The book was the seminal work in what became known as interior point methods for linear and nonlinear programming. Since its publication, thousands of technical papers have been published extending and expanding Mr. McCormick's and Mr. Fiacco's central ideas. The techniques developed from this research have been used in such diverse applications as airline crew scheduling, electric power generation, telescope design, microwave antenna design, determination of economic equilibria, and analysis of complex strategies for auctions. Mr. McCormick also developed a theory and methodology called factorable programming, which was influential in the development of algorithms for computing derivatives of mathematical functions on computers. He later authored two more books and dozens of research articles. He died August 24, 2008, leaving his wife, Virginia Service McCormick '57, a son, John H. McCormick '91, three daughters, and three grandchildren.

1958

Robert B. Kreis died February 9, 2008, leaving his wife, Linda Alznauer, a son, a daughter, four grandchildren, and a brother.

1972

Franklin J. Fullerman earned a master's degree in social work from the University of Chicago and promoted children's rights, working closely with child protective services. He was also passionate about writing a Bill of Rights for American schools. Mr. Fullerman died December 5, 2008.

1974

Dr. Paul E. Utgoff earned his PhD in computer science at Rutgers after earning a bachelor's degree in pipe organ performance at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. He spent two years as a scientist at Siemens Research and Technology Laboratories before joining the computer science faculty at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he was recognized internationally as a pioneer and leader in the area of machine learning. Mr. Utgoff's work remains state of the art in incremental decision tree induction. He served as a music director at a church and was teaching a new course and planning an organ recital at the time of his death on October 11, 2008. His wife of 34 years, Karen '74, three children, a brother, and a sister survive him.

1979

Laurie Lichtenstein DeAguiar worked in solar and wind energy. In Santa Rosa, Calif., she created the first choir in the Shomrei Torah Synagogue and performed locally as a concert pianist. She was pursuing a master's degree in architecture at Berkeley when she became too ill to continue. Mrs. DeAguiar was also a master gardener, cultivating more than 50 varieties of flowers in her private garden. In 2003, after a bone marrow transplant, she became active in many cancer support groups and created more than 150 paintings. She died April 20, 2008, leaving her husband, John, two daughters, and mother, Nancy '57.

1985

Traci Williams, whose stage name was Halima, performed with the Karamu House in Cleveland, Staunch Poets and Players in London, and appeared in TV commercials and corporate films. From 1985 to 1995 she was a performing artist, writer, and educator with the Living Stage Theatre Company. The organization performed in schools, jails, and the juvenile justice system. It also organized theater workshops for disabled children. Ms. Williams performed in two museum theater pieces at the Smithsonian Institution, and four of her plays have been produced professionally. After leaving the company she worked as an administrator with the Church of Scientology, serving as director for community outreach and education programs, executive director of the church's Harlem foundation, and director of quality assurance for the church's counselor training program. Ms. Williams died December 25, 2008, leaving two brothers.

1987

Jeffrey Lawrence Kellogg, a history and violin performance major died March 25 in Washington, D.C. After Oberlin, he played and studied in Austria, Aspen, Tanglewood, and Boston at the New England Conservatory. In the late 1980s, he was a member of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, and won several awards. He later earned a master of fine arts in creative writing from George Mason University and a master of public management at the University of Maryland. More recently, he taught private violin lessons in Seattle and Washington, D.C. His mother, siblings Clifton and Tamara Kellogg, and two nieces survive him.

1993

Kenneth Poindexter, 39, was captain of the Yeomen football team and voted Most Valuable Player. After Oberlin, he was employed as a shipping coordinator for Ball Corporation in Horsham, Pa. He died October 27, 2008, leaving two brothers, a sister, three stepsisters, and several nieces and nephews.

1994

Janet Yanosko Elkins earned her master of library and information science degree at Wayne State University and was promoted to associate librarian at the Mardigian Library at the University of Michigan-Dearborn in 2002. In 2001, she served as the library's systems administrator and offered her talents and unique insights to various library committees. Within the University community, she served on the Commission for Women, the Information Technology Advisory Committee, and the Web Strategy Team, where she assisted in the design of the Dearborn campus's current web site. She was also instrumental in the design and development of the Voice/Vision Holocaust Survivor Oral History Archive web site. Ms. Elkins died December 24, 2008, leaving her husband, Brian.

The Winter 2008-09 issue neglected to mention that Allan Spear's brother, Richard, is Oberlin's Mildred Jan Professor of Art History Emeritus who taught at the College from 1965 to 2000. He also directed the Allen Art Museum from 1972 to 1983. In 1997, Allan, a 1958 graduate, was awarded an honorary degree at the time he returned to Oberlin to deliver the commencement speech.

A SUPER VALUE IN RETIREMENT LIVING

LOCATION:

A STUDIO COTTAGE is Kendal's most reasonable accommodation with the lowest monthly fee and all the benefits. Enclosed patios may be added to these studio cottages. Phyllis Current chose a studio when she moved in with her full-size Allen organ, queen-sized bed and cedar chest. After NYC apartments, a studio cottage seems "spacious" to her. This is her privacy area, her home base, from which she radiates out to do the things she loves to do.

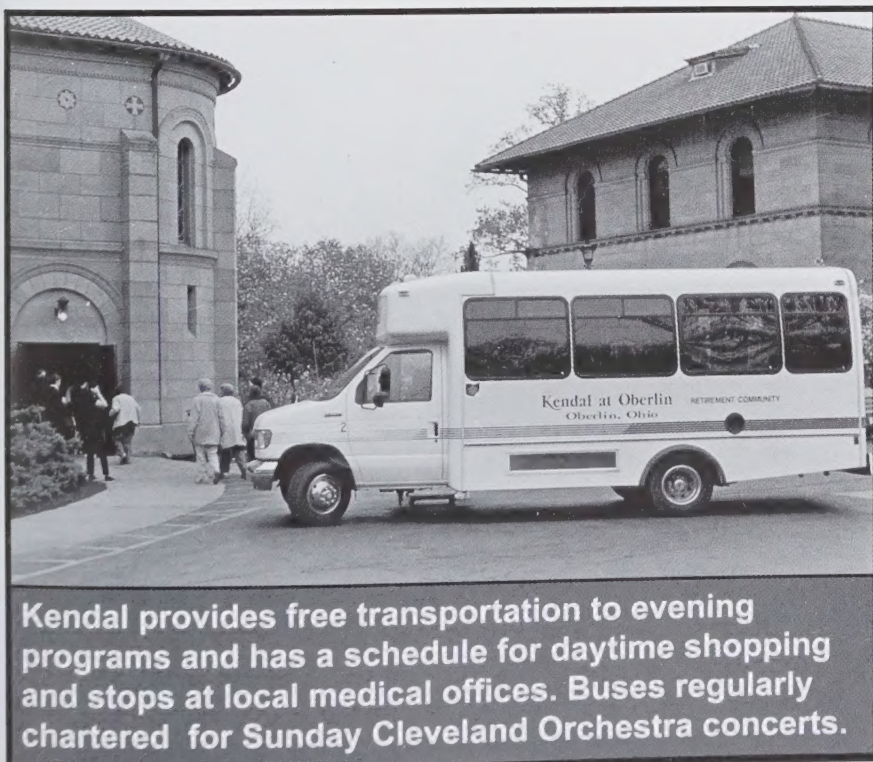
LOCATION:

IN KENDAL Phyllis has found friends, community, support. Single with no family, she is surrounded now by others who also love music and have similar intellectual interests. She is independent, but help is just a pull-cord away 24 hours a day. Programs and activities at Kendal are extensive, but the residents are an outgoing group. Oberlin Alumni Tours and Elderhostels attract Kendal residents. Phyllis often selects trips that relate to her college classes.



Phyllis Current didn't "go to Oberlin," but now she does. For ten years she has been auditing classes and attending concerts, recitals, plays, programs, operas, lectures, etc., and loves it.

Photos by Leslie Candor Farquhar, '50, a resident of Kendal



Kendal provides free transportation to evening programs and has a schedule for daytime shopping and stops at local medical offices. Buses regularly chartered for Sunday Cleveland Orchestra concerts.

LOCATION:

AT OBERLIN there are over 400 programs open to the public and sponsored by both town and gown. Most are free. Downtown and Phyllis' classrooms are six blocks from Kendal. Libraries are numerous and excellent. Historically-based organs in the churches and college buildings range in style from the early 17th century to the present, an unusual collection in such a small area. Phyllis loves to walk. Life at Kendal can be a very Oberlin thing to do.

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ONE MORE THING



Craig T. Mathew/Mathew Imaging

Oberlin Live on the West Coast

The Los Angeles Philharmonic Association presented the Oberlin Conservatory Symphony Orchestra on its Sounds About Town series on January 24. Under the baton of Bridget-Michaele Reischl, music director of the Oberlin orchestras, the ensemble made its Walt Disney Concert Hall debut with the world premiere of 2000 Oberlin

graduate Huang Ruo's *Hanging Cliffs*, which was commissioned by the Conservatory. Associate Professor of Piano Angela Cheng was soloist for Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58*, and Mahler's *Symphony No. 1 in D Major* concluded the program. This view of the cello section shows, left to right, fifth-year student Ellie Bors, junior Leah Metzler, and sophomore Glenna Curren.